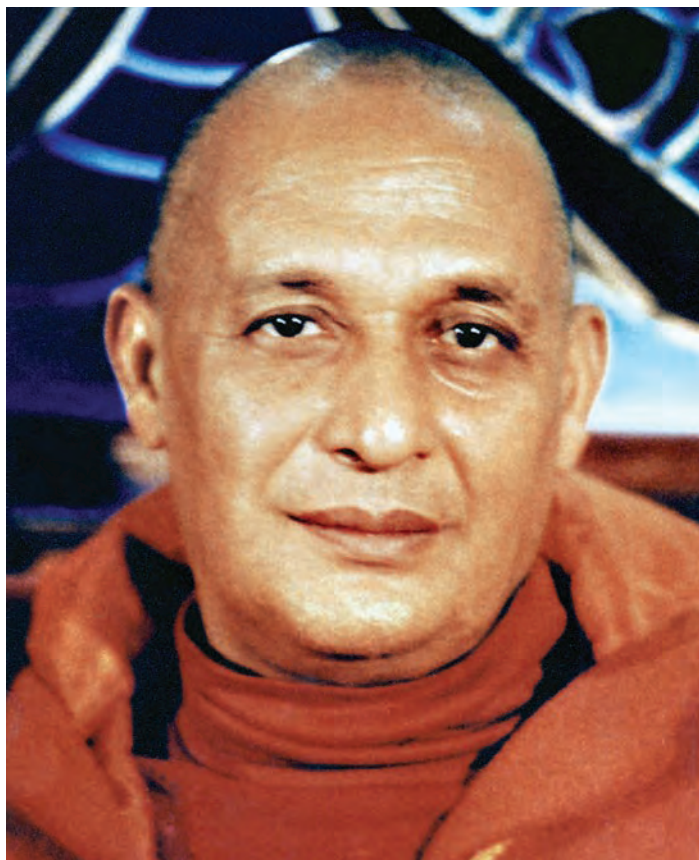


Volume IV

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Teachings of
Swami Satyananda
Saraswati
Volume IV



1963–2013
GOLDEN JUBILEE

WORLD YOGA CONVENTION 2013
GANGA DARSHAN, MUNGER, BIHAR, INDIA
23rd–27th October 2013

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Volume IV

*These talks and satsangs were delivered by
Swami Satyananda Saraswati during his visits to
Australia in 1968, 1976, 1977, 1978 and 1980.*



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

© Bihar School of Yoga 1986, 2012

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted or stored in a retrieval system, in any form or by any means, without permission in writing from Yoga Publications Trust.

The terms Satyananda Yoga® and Bihar Yoga® are registered trademarks owned by International Yoga Fellowship Movement (IYFM). The use of the same in this book is with permission and should not in any way be taken as affecting the validity of the marks.

First Australian edition 1977

Second Australian edition (*Satyam Speaks*) 1979

Published by Bihar School of Yoga

First edition 1986

Published by Yoga Publications Trust

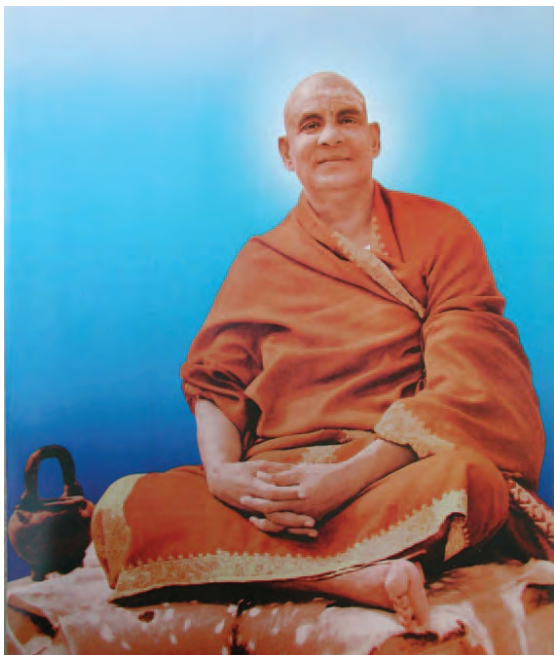
First edition 2012

ISBN: 978-81-85787-05-3

Publisher and distributor: Yoga Publications Trust, Ganga Darshan,
Munger, Bihar, India.

Website: www.biharyoga.net
www.rikhipeeth.net

Printed at Thomson Press (India) Limited, New Delhi, 110001



Dedication

*In humility we offer this dedication to
Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who initiated
Swami Satyananda Saraswati into the secrets of yoga.*

Contents

First Australian Tour 1968

1. The Higher System of Yoga	1
2. Spontaneous Awareness of Consciousness	13
3. Divine Life and Yoga	23
4. Withdrawal and Expansion of Consciousness	27
5. Relationship Between Mind and Senses	33

International Yoga Convention 1976

6. Press Conference on Arrival	39
7. Radio Interview	47
8. Yoga of the 1980s	58
9. The Inward Journey	70
10. Kriya Yoga, Kundalini Yoga and Tantra	84
11. Awakening the Spiritual Man	93
12. Satsang on Departure	112

Guru Poornima 1977 and 1978

13. Guru and Spiritual Life	114
14. Kriya Yoga and the Laughing Swamis	127
15. How to Use a Mantra	135
16. Interview with <i>Simply Living</i> Magazine	141

Yoga Convention and Tour 1978

17. Evolution of Consciousness through Meditation	156
18. Bhakti and Dhyana	163
19. Pain and Pleasure	170
20. The Philosophy of Yoga	173
21. Relaxation and Meditation	179
22. Spiritual Consciousness	190
23. How to Progress in Yoga	203
24. Meditation and Inner Knowledge	210
25. Under the Shelter of the Big Tree	221

Yoga Convention and Kriya Yoga Seminar 1980

26. Solution to Man's Spiritual Crisis	236
27. Satsang	241
28. The Will of God	251
29. Satsang	259
30. Breaking Through Illusions	273
31. The Story of Rama	278

1

The Higher System of Yoga

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, 10 May 1968.

Yoga is a very old science. The main purpose of yoga is to bring higher enlightenment to all mankind. The word *yoga* literally means 'union'; this means that the individual consciousness expands gradually and becomes infinite. This attainment of infinite consciousness by shutting off the empirical and objective personality is the main purpose of yoga. However, not everybody is ready or fit for this aim, thus we have other aspects such as hatha yoga, karma yoga, raja yoga, and jnana yoga.

If a person has achieved control over his mind and is able to dive deep into the innermost recesses of his personality, and if the winds of thought do not disturb him, then there is no yoga for him except meditation. However when the body is ill you need hatha yoga, and when the mind is ill you need raja yoga, bhakti yoga and karma yoga. Nevertheless, these are all the means; they do not represent the higher system of yoga.

The ultimate aim of yoga

When you are able to close your external awareness and attune yourself to a different state of consciousness, then yoga begins. Sometimes it is said that yoga begins when one starts doing karma selflessly, but this is not true. Some people feel that

yoga begins when one starts to achieve concentration of mind, when the mental tendencies begin to become one-pointed, but this is not true. Union begins when the notion of duality is completely lost for the individual who has been trying to experience this state of oneness.

Yoga does not mean duality. Yoga means unity. Duality is a kind of hallucination, so in order to correct this mistake, the practice of yoga should be done. In the practice of yoga the lower consciousness, which operates through the body, the senses, the mind, the intelligence and the ego, is negated through the process of meditation, which develops and illumines the inner part of your personality.

It has been said that the light is within, but there is an infinite realm of consciousness in man. We call it superconsciousness, expanded consciousness or higher consciousness. Through the practice of meditation, the lower consciousness is made to ascend and commune with this superconsciousness, and this communion is established for all time. This is the ultimate aim of yoga, but it is not possible for everybody to start practising yoga with this purpose, therefore yoga has often been misunderstood. It is true that we practise and teach yogasana and pranayama as well as other aspects of yoga. These are important, but at the same time there is a higher state of consciousness in every individual which he should realize. This realization is the ultimate purpose of yoga.

In order to achieve this purpose one must have a strong and healthy mind. Therefore, in order to bring about mental health, we practise other yogas for relaxation, sensory withdrawal and concentration. These yogas are not at all difficult and everyone can practise them.

A matter of awareness

Such things as infirmity of will and the concept of sin dissolve the moment one knows that they are only experiences of our consciousness and nothing else. This is the subject matter of yoga and when we practise yoga, we deal with our

consciousness. This consciousness seems to be in the form of awareness, rather than as it is philosophically or metaphysically understood by Eastern and Western philosophers.

This awareness in man is not manifest in animals. It is through this awareness that you know you are, and I know I am; that you know you are listening, and I know I am speaking. This awareness is completely dormant in animals, and therefore they do not know that they move and live. Sometimes animals do great deeds, but they do not know what they are doing. Self-awareness and the ability to develop the state of witnessing are completely absent in them, but these have become developed in every man.

In our case, this self-awareness is associated with sensory knowledge, intellectual knowledge, mental knowledge, and so on. The awareness is functioning through the lower media, and therefore in Vedanta we say that this awareness is associated with the senses, the mind, the prana and so on. Is it possible, however, that this awareness can be freed, can be made independent, insofar as its function is concerned, from these lower, limited and finite instruments?

Is it possible that my awareness could function without the help of any medium? Is it possible that I can know without the mind? Is it possible that I can see without the eyes? Is it possible that I can hear without the ears? Is it possible that all kinds of knowledge, every form of knowledge can develop within me, without depending on these material instruments?

This is what yoga achieves, and it has been proven from time to time by those people who have developed the supersensual, transcendental knowledge within them. There have been people in every period of history who have been able to know things without the help of any medium at all.

The nucleus of our personality

First of all, let us try to understand something about this awareness that is within us, through which we know we are, through which we are aware of the consciousness and through

which we are aware of the functions of yoga in relation to our personality. Is this awareness an expression of our brain, expressing itself through the senses, or is it completely distinct from the brainwaves? Is the brain the origin of consciousness, of awareness, or is the brain independent of awareness?

Eastern philosophy, especially Indian philosophy, says no, the brain is not the basis of consciousness and awareness is not the action of the brain. The awareness that I am existing, you are existing and everything is existing is not an offspring of the brain; the brain is not the source of consciousness. When a person dies the consciousness does not leave the brain. This consciousness or awareness in man is the nucleus, the centre or the hub of his personality.

If you see a spider busy spinning a web, you can understand that this spider is the cause of the whole web, and that this web again goes back inside the spider. The web is the manifestation of the functions, abilities and qualities of the spider. In the same way, within us there is consciousness which is the nucleus of our personality. Some call it *atman*, the self, or pure being. In Vedanta it is known as *Brahman*, which is the existence, the knowledge and the bliss. Actually it is nameless, but some name must be given so that people can understand this concept.

The process of involution

This awareness which is in man is also in animals and minerals. It is in every vegetable and in every visible and invisible object, but this awareness is sleeping, it is dormant. In Vedanta and in yoga, the sleeping consciousness is known as *purusha*, which literally means 'the consciousness sleeping in the city'. This body is the city of nine gates and the awareness is sleeping inside it.

In man this consciousness has started functioning or expressing itself through the very limited means of the hands, eyes, ears, mouth, skin, etc. These are the finite mediums through which the awareness is functioning, through seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, thinking, acting and so

forth. This potential is in animals, as well as in every sphere, visible and invisible. All that is taking place is because of the awareness of the power of consciousness, but animals are not aware of it.

As human beings we have become aware of the consciousness in a gross sense, but when we become aware in the spiritual sense, that awareness becomes what is known as God. It is here that the concept of God begins; when man begins to feel that awareness of God is within him. In ancient times man asked, "What is that awareness in me?" Those people who were interested in inner awareness were not the same ones who were afraid of thunderbolts, terrible rains, great floods, the rising sun or the setting moon, or who created the concept of God around these phenomena.

On the other hand, these people began to ask, "What is this awareness in me? How do I know that I am? How do I know that it is? And what is this awareness which continues in spite of my death every night? I die every night, but again the next morning I am aware, I am the same man and it continues." So they began to explore the possibility of the fact of continuity, and ultimately they came to the conclusion that this awareness, through which I know I am, is only a partial expression of that Supreme Consciousness in every being.

They began to experiment in order to find out the finite scope, but they found that the consciousness is infinite so they stopped the investigations. Then they asked, "From where does it spring?" This started a process of involution or returning to the source, and this process was actually and practically started through the process of yoga. What happens in yoga?

Purification of consciousness

In yoga you try to withdraw your consciousness so that the field of knowledge becomes narrower in the realm of the visible world of external knowledge. You stop seeing, hearing, feeling, acting, thinking, and for the time being you completely disassociate the awareness from objects. When two

people are standing opposite each other, the awareness is associated through the medium of the eyes and if one closes his eyes, there is disassociation.

However, that is not enough to break the awareness, because one still remembers the other person. Thus, his awareness is associated with the presence of the other person through the mind, rather than the eyes. In yoga, one must withdraw the mind so that a person can be in front of you and, even though you have seen him a hundred times, your awareness is completely free of any impression of him.

When you listen to someone speak, your awareness is associated with the flow of words and the sound. If you plug your ears, your consciousness, that is functioning through the medium of your senses, is disconnected. You don't hear anymore, but you have the experience or the impressions of all those words that you have heard in your mind. If you withdraw your consciousness from the mind, then all the words you have heard in the past and all the knowledge you have gathered through your ears is also completely dislocated from the awareness.

This is how the process of purification works. Please note the word 'purification', because it is always understood with an ethical and moral background, but it should not be understood that way. Purification of consciousness is the process in which you free your consciousness from the incoming impressions, the accumulated impressions and also the possibility of the impressions that might be gathered in the future.

When you close your ears, your mind becomes free from the external sound. When you close your eyes, your mind becomes free from the visual perceptions, the ocular perceptions. If you withdraw your mind, your mind becomes free from thoughts. But what happens to the experiences of the past? There are thousands of experiences from the past and in yoga they are called *samskaras*. These impressions, which lie in the subliminal body of man, decide the mode of function of his awareness. Awareness functions in the

form of passion, greed, memory, pain, pleasure, ignorance, understanding and misunderstanding, because these are the impressions. You have to scrape these impressions from the mind through involution.

Pratyahara, dharana, dhyana

In yoga we first withdraw the senses, we cut off the connections, then the awareness becomes free of the senses. When your consciousness becomes free from sense association, it is known in yoga as withdrawal or *pratyahara*. Pratyahara is the first state in yoga in which your awareness is disassociated from the sense experiences. Yoga does not begin with asanas, nor with ethics and morality. Yoga begins when all the sense perceptions are withdrawn. This state of pratyahara is where the lower scheme of yoga begins.

The second process is control of the mind. The mind remembers through memory, in the form of visions, thoughts, impressions, worries, anxieties, etc. It is easy to withdraw your awareness from the senses, but it is more difficult to control the mind. The mind is very powerful, and it is through the mind that you are working on the whole scheme of spiritual evolution. Therefore, in order to consolidate the multiphase tendencies of the mind, there is a beautiful method known as dharana.

Dharana means fixing the mind on an object after the senses have been withdrawn. The object could be gross, semi-gross or abstract, but the mind must have an object or a centre on which to fix itself and gradually focus all of its faculties. Thus the field of the mind is made very narrow. This particular art of yoga is known as the process of negation. This is the process of involution. When the personality is completely withdrawn, it comes to a point.

When you have completely withdrawn the associations and your consciousness or awareness to a point, it functions as a cross, a triangle, a flower, a circle, a sound, or exactly like a point. Then you start developing it, you start expanding it. Whereas before you were contracting your consciousness

from a circle to a point of awareness, now this point is to be developed into the form of a circle. But the difference is that the first circle was the objective or finite circle and this circle is infinite. This is the process of expansion of consciousness where the sense experiences are completely absent.

Therefore, in the practice of yoga, meditation does not only mean that you close your eyes and see something. I think that people do not know how to meditate, and that is the whole problem. Many people think that to sit down and close the eyes is meditation. As a matter of fact, the word 'meditation' is not even the right word. It is not meditation we are talking about here, it is complete awareness.

Therefore, when you practise either meditation or awareness, you must start with those practices which withdraw your awareness. Then fix your mind on some object so that it comes to a point, and then your awareness also becomes one-pointed. Next, try to expand this point to the maximum possible extent. Then the experience of meditation takes place. This is where yoga and Vedanta meet.

Mantra meditation

A few practices can be given in the process of yoga. The first is the art of spontaneous mantra meditation, which is technically known as *ajapa japa*. In the beginning it is practised with the help of the breath. When you close your eyes you don't withdraw yourself from the objects, but you bring your mind closer to the breath consciousness. The breath should be the normal breath which you breathe throughout the day. The difference is that you become aware of the process of breathing. If you maintain this awareness for about half an hour, you can transcend one phase of your mental consciousness.

After continuous awareness of the breath, you should discover the sound of the breath. It may happen on the first day or maybe after a few months. When you are able to discover the sound of the breath, that is mantra. The sound is not the physical sound, it is the psychic sound. If you become

aware of the breathing process today, you will hear the physical sound; but when your consciousness merges with the breath, your breath and mind become one. They are synchronized with each other. The mind becomes the prana and the prana becomes the mind; the breath becomes the mind and the mind becomes the breath; they operate as one entity. It is at this moment that the sound is discovered.

This is the so called *bija* mantra, seed mantra or root mantra. When you are able to discover that particular mantra from the depths of your consciousness, it can be said that you have transcended. It does not mean that you have transcended all the phases of objective awareness, rather it means that you have transcended just one step of the external awareness. Once you have discovered the mantra, you can continue to use it. This is one practice that can be done anywhere. Even now you can do it with your eyes open or closed, with your spinal cord bent or straight. You can do it at any time throughout the day.

The second process is called *japa* yoga, which is rhythmic sound movement. It is so powerful that even if the tranquilizer fails to relieve your tension, this practice will act immediately. Meditation is nothing but a certain kind of movement of consciousness, and *japa* yoga is the rhythmic movement of your consciousness. In this method you take a particular sound, *Om*, *Kleem*, *Ram* or any other sound you like, and bring about a state of transcendence in the realm of your awareness by making a continuous, rhythmic movement of the sound, each repetition half a second, for twenty minutes.

Let the mind continue to function in the form of worries, anxieties, memories, reflections, anticipations or brooding. You must keep one-pointed in the straightforward, rhythmic movement of the sound, or rather in the rhythmic movement of the consciousness in the form of the sound. You should continue at the same moderate speed, neither too quick nor too slow. Once you have fixed a speed for yourself, you should maintain the same rhythm.

The point of consolidation

After twenty minutes of continuous awareness in the rhythmic movement of consciousness in the form of a sound, remain in the same position and become still. Now develop your awareness in the form of an image and find out if the movement of consciousness has brought about some tangible results. If the sound movement has brought about a tangible result, then the moment you close your eyes and think of a triangle, the triangle comes as a vision rather than as a thought.

The image is clear when the consciousness is pure. This purity of consciousness is to be understood absolutely in the spiritual and metaphysical sense, rather than in the ethical or moral sense. In spite of the fact that your mind was running here and there in between the practice, the moment you stop the movement and close your eyes, the image should appear. You can take any image, a circle, a triangle, a rose or a human form, but once it is decided upon, the image should not be changed, even if other forms come to replace it.

The form which you have decided upon is the basis for the manifestation of your consciousness. This particular form can be your deity or your guru, one whom you love and adore. Always try to develop the awareness of this one unchanging form. When this form comes to you in the form of imagination or an idea, it means that your awareness is not yet clear; there is some kind of disturbance of mind. When you are able to see that image as if it is a conscious dream, it means your awareness is coming to the point of consolidation or crystallization.

Spiritual vision

If the form continues in the plane of your consciousness like a vivid dream with colours, it means your consciousness is completely disassociated and is functioning independently on the borderline of knowledge. Eventually you are able to see the object as clearly as you see an object with your eyes open. This is the experience of expanded consciousness, or the fourth dimension, which is the ultimate aim of yoga.

Through yoga that dimension of consciousness is achieved in which you can see your consciousness as clearly and as real as you see the things outside. In the yogic texts this is called spiritual vision. The classical term for that is *darshan*, which means to see an object without the medium of the senses, without thinking, without feeling and without touching.

All these things which come in the form of an image, an idea, a vision or a conscious dream are different manifestations of your own awareness. It is your own being, the atman, the nucleus of your personality. When you have this vision, when you experience this fourth dimension of your personality, then you have completed your yoga and you are having the higher experience that 'I am all'.

Know thyself

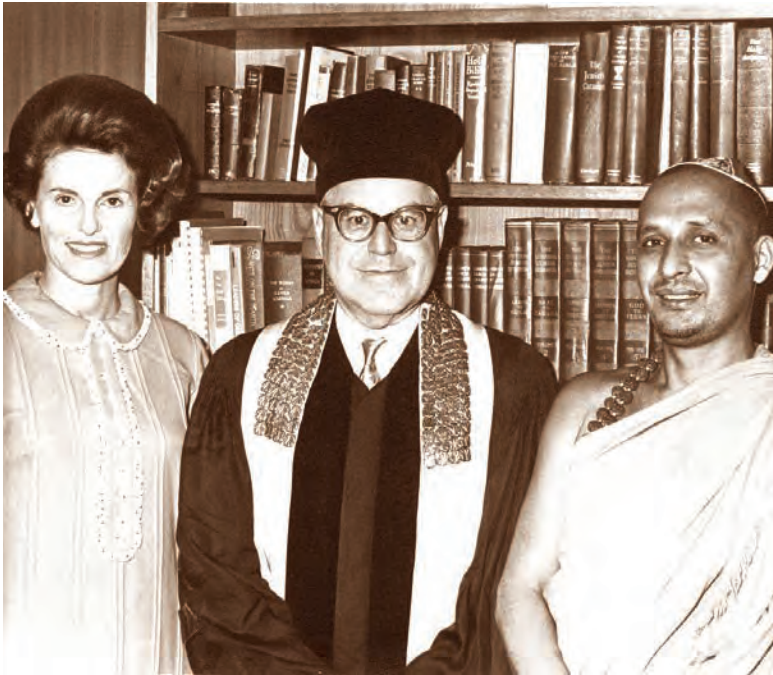
I have given you some idea about the theory and background of yoga. I don't know if my ideas will be agreeable to you, but the time has come when you have to understand yoga in a different light. Yoga came to the West in the form of physical exercises; now it is developing as a new science and many psychologists are thinking in terms of using meditation for the remedy for psychoneurosis.

It should be done, but a few sincere aspirants must come forward and work hard to develop that higher awareness. Out of millions of people all over the world, only a few actually try to take up the path of yoga for the higher realization or higher experience. The ultimate purpose of yoga is to experience oneself in the purest state. Now, we do not know ourselves in the purest state. What we know about ourselves is all mixed up.

We know ourselves in terms of "I am a Christian, I am a Hindu, I am a man, I am a woman, my name is this, my name is that, I am an MA, I am a BA, I am a manufacturer, I am a businessman." We know ourselves in terms of all those attributes, which is a kind of confused knowledge. We have to disassociate from all these types of knowledge and gradually begin to understand ourselves as we are.

Therefore, when Socrates said, “Know thyself,” he meant to say, try to realize the centre of your personality. When the great saint Ramana Maharshi said, “Think, who am I”, he meant to say, try to realize the centre of your personality. Many great men have been trying to say this from time to time. Thus, you should try to strive to realize and understand both theoretically and practically this higher aim of yoga.

There is no other path and there is no other way by which you will be able to experience your own consciousness. There are different paths by which you can come nearer to God. There are various religions, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, through which you can worship God in your own way, but when you want to make the consciousness free from its limitations, then the only method is yoga. This method is the yoga of meditation.



2

Spontaneous Awareness of Consciousness

Triad School of Yoga, Sydney, Australia, 11 May 1968.

In Sanskrit, *sadhana* means spiritual effort, not physical or mental effort. Spiritual effort should be made. This spiritual effort seems to be an act of opening the doors beyond which there is enlightenment. How can we open the door and find that life in us?

Enlightenment is the prime purpose of yoga and the purpose for which we practise it. There are many spiritual practices. Out of these, there is one method which has become popular throughout the world, and that method is called the spontaneous awareness of consciousness; the spontaneous consciousness of awareness. I will try to develop this theme as simply as I can.

How to practise

Sit in a steady meditative posture, with the eyes closed. For some time become aware of the physical body from top to toe. Keep the awareness on the body until you find that you are going out of the body, that body consciousness is becoming lost.

Usually what happens when body consciousness comes to our mind is that we try to avoid it and it comes again. In this method, however, we know that we are thinking of the body, we are aware of the body and we are conscious of the existence

of all the bodily things. At the same time, the concentration becomes so deep that after a while we switch from body to mind and we become aware of the thought processes which are taking place somewhere in the conscious and subconscious fields.

The body is gone, and the mind remains. What is that mind? It appears in the form of thoughts, in the form of emotions, in the form of certain subtle processes which you have to see. Every thought that emerges from the subconscious level, every thought that comes in the form of a symbol, in the form of a vision, or in the form of an idea – that you must see as clearly as you can. Detach yourself completely. For the moment you do not identify yourself with the thought process. After a few days practice, you will find that you are beyond the mind also.

Although you were aware of the body, you were aware of the mind, you have lost the idea of the body and the mind. After that, what happens? The consciousness of 'I' comes, just 'I', that is all, devoid of the idea of body, devoid of the idea of mind; just 'I' without name, without distinction of caste, creed, sex or formal name. Nothing . . . just awareness of 'I'. This awareness becomes so extended, so supreme, that there is a point where the difference between I and thee, they and he – everything becomes lost.

This is the final point in spiritual realization. When doing meditation, the spiritual aspirant should develop his awareness to the supreme degree. The little awareness must diffuse into the Supreme awareness, so that ultimately nothing should remain except the One. When that supreme state is attained, we arrive at a point which is called 'revelation', or giving up of the knowledge. That is the point of liberation, the point of freedom and the point of the isolation of consciousness.

Some important suggestions

In yoga it is seen that man becomes free of tensions in deep meditation. He becomes free from all worries and anxieties, from all the so-called subconscious trammels, and finds peace

within himself. This peace is different from happiness. This peace is a kind of positive, dynamic power.

Those who wish to take up this meditation should remember a few important points. First of all, they should make their asana perfect; the asana in which they can sit comfortably for an hour, without moving the body and without feeling any pain, without hampering the blood circulation.

Then, after deep meditation, they must see that they do not go into a state of depression, which is usual for all spiritual aspirants because of insufficient oxygen in the system. Lack of oxygen causes depression, yawning and sleep, which must be avoided by regular practice of pranayama, through pure diet and so on. When this has been fixed up, then one has to correct the faults in one's own meditation.

Meditation seems so easy in the beginning, but when you actually practise, then it is so difficult. After a certain stage, what happens? The practitioner sleeps, he forgets everything all around him, he does not remember what he is doing and not only that, he also forgets that he is doing it. The self-awareness is also lost. That is the state of total suspension of mind, which is not desirable in meditation. Most aspirants who sit for meditation want to forget everything and that is quite alright, but please remember that you should try to forget everything except self-awareness.

This is the one central point you must remember throughout meditation. If you forget it, you miss the path and then you enter into the *laya* state. *Laya* means total suspension of consciousness and that is a spiritual loss. Therefore, what should happen in meditation is that when you sit down quietly and try to forget your body and mind through positive or negative methods, the consciousness should remain to a very great extent. The awareness that you are meditating should be maintained.

The meditator, the object of meditation and the process of meditation exist up to the point of meditation or *dhyana*. I am meditating – this awareness should remain; the point that I am meditating on – this should remain; and the process of

meditation, how it is proceeding – that also should remain. This triad, this threefold process helps you in the beginning to maintain your awareness throughout the practice, otherwise suspension of consciousness takes place.

Then, finally you must have patience, perseverance and the power of intuition, through which you will force your consciousness to detach itself from the material aspect of your personality.

Everybody should try it

This is just a glimpse of meditation. Much has to be told about it. I feel that in life everything is there and most things you can get very quickly, but you do not get what we call meditation. There are very few teachers or guides to give us point by point teaching, to let us know how to take this mind on the path of the divine pilgrimage.

The mind has to be taken from outside, where it is loafing about here and there in the sense objects of the world, in the temporary things that are so nice in the beginning and so bad in the end, and directed inside. The innermost part of our personality is full of illumination, full of knowledge, full of peace and full of bliss. Those who know how to go there, at least for a few seconds every day, know how to maintain peace, tranquillity, equanimity and strength in their lives.

This is the panacea for our age. My request to all of you is to try meditation every day, if possible in the morning hours and, if not possible, in the evening before you go to bed. If you practise in the morning, however, the state of body and mind, the glandular secretions and so forth are so conducive to meditation. You can practise anytime between 4 and 6 am. Let it not be forced, let it be spontaneous, let it come from within you.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Could you give the students an idea of the practical incorporation of one's meditation in activity or karma yoga?

When one meditates and finds the light within, then one has to transfer the light outside into one's life. The peace one experiences should emanate from within and reflect into the life outside in behaviour, thought and action, and so on. It is said that the yogi who has experienced peace within undertakes every action in this life as the command of the higher powers. Not only that, it is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* that every action is an instrumental cause for self-purification.

Therefore, we should perform the work and be free from its negative influence. We must see that we do not taint the personality, inner order, equilibrium and tranquillity that we have attained through meditation and through spiritual silence. We should prove it to be the same in our day-to-day life. That is the order of karma yoga in relation to spiritual enlightenment.

Could you amplify that further, for instance, taking the statement from the Bhagavad Gita, "Do thou action for the sake of action, not for the results of action."

Usually when we do anything in this world, we do achieve results, positive, negative or mixed. They are always there; however, it is the negative results which influence our minds. If we get good results, it is alright. But we never get only positive results; the results are always mixed or negative. Therefore, the mind is greatly influenced by the negative aspect of results.

You have to reap the results anyway, but what you must do is make the mind so strong, so well attended, and at the same time so powerful, that the influence is not felt by the mind, you are not shaken. It is said in the *Gita*, "You should do your duty, but do not be attached, do not be influenced by the results of the action."

Please relate the relationship between breathing and mind control.

Through the practice of pranayama, the brain matter can be affected to a great degree. As a result of that, peace of mind increases on account of the introduction of extra oxygen. By the practice of pranayama the mind is quietened to a large extent for another reason also. Perhaps *kumbhaka*, breath retention, brings about a state of inertia in our cardiac system, so naturally, where there is inertia, there is peace and tranquillity.

Also, apart from the ordinary practices of pranayama, there are other practices which are very little known, whereby the awakening of kundalini takes place and control of the mind becomes very easy, but those pranayama practices are not usually spoken of in the books. All the usual breathing exercises that we do are naturally good to bring about a state of passivity in the mind, but to have complete control over all the dimensions of *chitta*, the mind stuff, higher pranayama must also be practised.

Please explain more about this feeling of awareness in meditation.

The concept is that in every human being there is awareness, and that awareness is present even now. Because of that awareness you know that you are listening. You are doing something, you are thinking something, and at the same time, you are aware of it, you are a witness of it. You do not find this awareness in an animal, because at that stage of evolution, the awareness is undeveloped, it is dormant, it is sleeping. Therefore the animal does many things, but it does not know.

When this awareness, which has developed in man right from the beginning, leaves the portals of the body and mind, it becomes completely pure. When the body consciousness and the mental consciousness are activated with this pure consciousness, that is known as cosmic consciousness. This cosmic awareness has no form. It is not in the form of attention

or in the form of thought either. It is just a kind of awareness, if I may say so.

For example, you are sitting here now. You are aware of so many things and your awareness is full of illumination. However, if, for the time being, I were to ask you to maintain your awareness as it is, at the same height, but I somehow removed all the main objects from your view, as if by magic everything in front of you were to disappear, then only awareness would remain, at the same intensity, at the same height.

That is the form of awareness in yoga, and usually it is not properly understood because we have no fundamental conception of the word 'awareness'. When I use that word, I say this awareness is the existence, and this awareness remains even at night when you are deeply asleep. Now, in the morning when you wake up, I ask you, "How did you sleep?" You answer, "I had a nice sleep; I slept well." Then the question arises, if you were asleep, how do you know that you were sleeping well? It means that the experiencer, the witness of the sleep was also there. So, in yoga, this awareness is a very supreme and subtle state.

We have asked you for an explanation of karma yoga, which is one of the yogas most suitable for the West, where people try to express their spirituality in action. Could you also give us some illuminating ideas on the subject of bhakti yoga.

Karma yoga and bhakti yoga, in my opinion, must go hand in hand. Without bhakti yoga, karma yoga cannot be practised, and bhakti comes from within. According to yoga, there are two types of bhakti. One is the form of ritual and prayers about which we already know enough. The other aspect of bhakti is non-ritualistic; it is of the nature of your heart, the feeling for God in which you have not been trained and which you know nothing about.

The strong feeling, the strong impulse, the strong attraction towards the Supreme Being is known as *bhakti*. As a matter of fact, my concept of bhakti is a method, a process of adjustment,

of selfless emotion in man. We have so much emotion, so much love in us, so much of a certain kind of energy. We give that energy to our children, to our family members, to various works in the world, but still it remains unexhausted.

Then, what happens is that it creates an explosion in the personality. It is something like a tank getting filled up with a stream of water and then overflowing. The energy fills our mind and the mind is unable to contain that energy, so it overflows. When it overflows, it manifests in the form of erratic behaviour, in the form of so many things that we see in the world: murder, crime, this and that. This is nothing but misguided emotion. Now, this energy of which we have so much and which we cannot control must be properly directed. How do we do this?

If we give the whole of this emotional energy to our family members, it is not sufficient. In fact, we can love the whole world, we have so much energy, but we do not know how to do this. Therefore, it was ultimately decided by the ancient rishis and seers that you must find a cosmic being, the Supreme Being, and whatever love you have, give it to Him. In this way, the infinite treasure of love, which you have been misusing so far in so many ways, can be properly channelled to Him, since He is infinite and can consume all the love you give.

He can understand all the forms of love which you give Him. You can give love to Him in the form of prayer, in the form of service to humanity, in the form of calm and quiet meditation, in the form of self-purification, or in the form of chanting His name day in and day out. You give Him your love in any manner you can, and He is able to consume it, because He is eternal and infinite. So, this is the concept of bhakti yoga, which I think is one of the most wonderful methods of bringing man to normal behaviour.

You mentioned that we should meditate between 4 and 6 am. Is there any particular reason for this?

According to that system of hatha yoga, the time for sadhana is from 4 to 6 am when both the solar and lunar systems are

active. On account of this, the sushumna nadi flows freely and therefore meditation becomes easier. What do we mean by lunar and solar? By lunar we mean the mental system, and by solar we mean the vital system. These two systems start working together between four and six am. During this time, when both the mental and pranic systems, the solar and the lunar systems are functioning, meditation is spontaneous, without any difficulty. That is the purpose.

Could you tell us more about the subject of kundalini?

This is a very complex and powerful subject. One has to deal with kundalini with great caution and vigilance. The word *kundalini* in yoga pertains to the sleeping energy in man. In the lower part of the body is a gland which is not developed as yet. Through certain kriyas, the forces can be aroused in that particular gland. As you know, every part of the body has corresponding activities and faculties. The brain has its own, but these are the psychic faculties, the deeper and higher faculties, the secret faculties.

According to those who practise kundalini yoga, the seat of kundalini is at the perineum, in a particular gland which can be awakened by definite methods under regulated conditions. When that is done, a sympathetic response takes place through the nervous channels. There are many other centres which can also be aroused. In kundalini yoga there are many methods by which you can awaken the psychic centres.

Nowadays, however, they first try to find out whether the aspirant has awakened any psychic centre in his previous life. A person who has done spiritual practices beforehand and awakened some of his psychic powers before he died is very advanced and some of his chakras are already developed. So, first we have to find out from where he should begin. Then, according to that, the practices are ordained. I think the method to awaken kundalini depends much upon previous achievement.

Could you please explain the importance of diet in yoga practices?

Diet plays an important role because of its relation with the digestive system. Digestion has a lot to do with meditation. During meditation, the hydrochloric acid and other digestive secretions which are directly stimulated by the diet prove to be a great hindrance and obstruction to the practice. When you are sitting in meditation, hyperacidity in the stomach can bring about any vision, hallucination or illusion.

In the same manner, if there is heat, fermentation and toxins in the system, then not only the digestive system reacts, but the brain also. So, naturally it is said that the diet is very important in yoga and it should be properly taken care of.

Could you please explain a little about the present Wesak Festival, where the blessings of the Lord Buddha are poured forth?

I feel that in everyone's spiritual life, the development of awareness is the greatest event. We don't talk about the body, we talk about the soul, the spirit. The spirit passes through a dark period and finally that darkness is removed through certain understandings or visions of hidden light, or the experience of astral events. There is a moment when the awareness becomes so full and thereafter no further expansion takes place. That is the concept of *nirvana*, of complete enlightenment, complete emancipation. Complete enlightenment means that the individual awareness fuses with the cosmic awareness, and the notion of duality between the individual and the Cosmos is completely annihilated. That is the concept on which the fundamentals of meditation and of awareness should be built.

3

Divine Life and Yoga

The Divine Life Society, Sydney, Australia, 12 May 1968.

We are meeting under the banner of the Divine Life Society of Sydney. This brings me back to 1943, when I joined the ashram of my guru, Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, when I was only nineteen or twenty. The ashram was in the jungle where there were cobras, monkeys, mosquitoes and scorpions. Most of us, including Swami Sivananda, had to go on foot two or two and a half miles for our daily ration of food. We used to get a little vegetables only once a week. We were very unhealthy in those days. There were no people in Rishikesh then; now it is very big town, especially with the Divine Life Society and many other ashrams flourishing there.

I came to Swami Sivananda with a purpose. Previously I had attained a fairly good state of meditation. I would go into meditation and become unconscious, and I thought that I had attained samadhi, but I was distrustful of it. By samadhi, I mean the highest state of yoga.

One day, when I was young, I met a mahatma, a great saint, who was passing from my birthplace to Mount Kailash, a journey of about one hundred and sixty miles over some of the highest mountain ranges in the world. I told him about my achievement and he asked me to sit for meditation. While sitting, I became completely unconscious. Afterwards he told

me that everything was correct; I was going along the right path in meditation and should continue in that way.

However, I still wanted to know what this unconsciousness was. It is true that I became unconscious to the outside world, but what about the inner awareness? I asked the saint to show me the technique of gaining awareness, but he said he did not know it and could not help me further, so he told me that I should find a guru. Well, somehow or other I came to Rishikesh and joined the ashram of Swami Sivananda. The first thing he told me regarding this matter was, "Exhaust your karmas."

You will be surprised to know that I spent twelve years exhausting my karmas there. Nine of those years I was working in the ashram as a cook, a scavenger, a servant boy, a typist, a manager, a secretary and a spiritual helper. In every respect Swamiji tried me in a thousand ways. He asked servants to insult me; he asked me to misbehave with others. Many times I failed in these tests, but after all, I had to exhaust my karmas.

Swamiji would say, "The servant boy is bad, you will have to chuck him out." So I would do it, but later on during introspection, it would come to me that I should not have done so; it was not divine life, not the higher life. There appear to be two different standards in life. One is the human life; the human contact in which we have good and bad. The other is the divine life, where everything is judged from a higher standard.

The human standard is, if anyone inflicts an injury on you, then you give it back in the same measure. The divine standard is, if anyone inflicts injury on you, just accept it with complacency. Swami Sivananda used to believe that a yogi who wants to attain the higher spiritual path should practise the divine life standard along with meditation.

For Swamiji, the ethical way of living was not merely an adjustment with society, but primarily an act of purification. I should not steal from your property, not because it will send me to jail, but because it is not an act of purity. Similarly, I observe non-violence, and kindness and compassion for all

people, not because it is ethical, but because thereby my karma will be exhausted and my heart will become pure.

This is the way by which we can exhaust the dross and density of our karma in our day-to-day life. Our sense perceptions must be purified, only then will life be illuminated from inside. Swami Sivananda said to me a number of times, “Look, you have attained a very high state of meditation and you become unconscious, but you are unable to develop the supreme awareness in yourself. Why so? There still remains a boundary wall and you must overcome it by working out your karmas.”

I lived with Swami Sivananda for twelve years. Every day I was trying to come to terms with insult, injury, pain, hardship and pleasure, all alike. After twelve years he told me, “Your sadhana is almost complete. So far, you have been learning the divine life here in the ashram with your spiritual brothers; you have been testing yourself. Now live in the world and see how you fare.”

I left the ashram and for eight years I was moving throughout India from village to village, from state to state. I travelled on foot, by bullock cart, by train, by plane, by any way. Sometimes people would criticize me and say, “Look how this young man is wasting his time.” Then I used to analyze myself: “What am I feeling?” Often I went without food because I had to live on alms. Sometimes when I asked for alms from a householder who was educated, he would insult me and tell me to get out. One time I got onto a train, a good friend having purchased a ticket for me in an air-conditioned compartment, and a sophisticated man said, “Look here Swamiji, this is air-conditioned!” How very insulted I felt, for I had as much a right to the air-conditioned compartment as he had.

I used to continually analyze myself to see how the knocks of life were affecting my inner state of mind, and with each year I tried to perfect that divine life within me. I do not say I am perfected yet, but I want to emphasize the importance of constant practice of this higher side of life together with

other yogic practices and meditation. It is essential for combating that particular wall which stands between samadhi and meditation. After meditation there is a wall and I do not think that you will be able to pass over it. It is so difficult to get through that boundary wall.

Swami Sivananda used to say that the sadhaka's life must be of such nobility and so fulfilling that the onslaughts, tremors and shocks of life, from family members, friends and enemies, from well-wishers and ill-wishers just do not affect him. He used to give us the analogy of a man and his baby. Imagine there is a young man standing and his little baby comes and pulls at his trouser leg and says, "Papa." The man may get a surprise, but he does not fall over. In the same manner, the troubles of life should be like the baby. We should be aware of the tremors but remain unshaken.

Once that mental state is achieved which is not intellectual, but a state of being, a state of discrimination, a state of awareness, a state of thorough self-analysis, you will find that your meditation becomes spontaneous. It is something like opening the cap of the petrol can and then passing a lighted match over it. Everything is burned up in no time at all. I think that meditation is the easiest thing to master, but the trouble is that our life, our thinking, our habits, our responses are not in accord with the divine law that meditation requires.

Therefore, some kind of philosophy will help you all in life. Whether this philosophy is based on yoga, on religion or on bhakti, it must emerge from the depths of your heart, so that one day or the other, when you sit for meditation, your consciousness shoots up like a rocket and goes to the highest point of samadhi. This is the relation of divine life and yoga. So side by side with yoga, please practise divine life little by little. If today you say it is not possible for you to practise it, I assure you that even after you have attained the highest state of meditation, you will find that you cannot proceed further without it.

4

Withdrawal and Expansion of Consciousness

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, 14 May 1968.

Great psychologists predicted that the present technological revolution would create new psychological problems for mankind, and their predictions have come true. The modern mind is absolutely sick. Electrical gadgets, computers and other automation devices have reduced the work week and given the individual much leisure time. He does not know how to utilize his time creatively, so he spends his time in nerve-exciting amusements through which he tries to forget himself. His psychological problems are piling up day by day. Family problems, economic problems, health problems, emotional problems and many other problems continually assail him and make his mind restless.

Modern man has become absolutely mechanical because everything is done for him by machines. He lives as if in a dream, not knowing what he is doing or why he is doing it. Modern civilization has placed before man all sorts of comforts and amusements, but unfortunately he has lost his appetite for them. His mind is in torment, in sorrow and in tension; his mental sickness prevents him from enjoying them.

There was a time when India was at the peak of its civilization and material prosperity. At that time, mental tensions assailed its citizens just as they are overtaking

the people of Western countries today. Where there is wealth and prosperity, the mind becomes lazy, the mind comes to a point of stagnation, and in that outer mind come all kinds of vices, worries and neuroses.

It was at that time that there appeared in India the sage Kapila with his system of Samkhya yoga. Kapila expounded the yoga philosophy. In his philosophy, he did not discuss the topic of God. Later, during the period of Lord Buddha, Sage Patanjali modified Kapila's Samkhya philosophy and presented it in the form of his *Yoga Sutras*. Sage Patanjali defined yoga as a science of mental control, which is complete control over all the dimensions of personality and the various patterns of behaviour.

Purusha and prakriti

In Sanskrit *chitta* means, consciousness or awareness. The awareness in man is known as chitta, because it is through the chitta that awareness takes place. All the mental, subconscious and unconscious perceptions take place here. The principle element in man through which he knows everything is chitta, consciousness or awareness. It is through this awareness that we see, hear, understand and remember every experience, even in the deep sleep state. This consciousness is unconditioned and pure, but when it associates itself with the body, the mind and the intellect, it becomes conditioned by theses limiting and confining adjuncts and considers itself in bondage. According to yoga, awareness is different from the body, and when this awareness disassociates itself from the body, mind and intellect, it becomes free or liberated.

This awareness is pure bliss. It is infinite and free from every limitation. It has neither form nor name, yet it pervades all forms of life. It is more manifest in the human species than in lower forms of animals, vegetables and minerals. Just as butter is present in milk in an unmanifest form, or fire is present in wood, so also the principle of consciousness is hidden behind all forms of life.

This principle of consciousness is known as *purusha* and the various forms of life through which it expresses itself are termed as the effects of *prakriti*. Prakriti, or nature, is the vehicle, the instrument through which consciousness, purusha, is manifesting itself through the various doors of perception.

According to the Samkhya system of Kapila, prakriti is composed of twenty-four elements, which are the five organs of perception: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin; the five organs of action: feet, hands, excretory organs, organ of procreation, organ of speech; the five pranas: prana, apana, samana, udana, vyana; the five material elements: earth, water, fire, air, ether; and the four internal principles of mind, consciousness, intellect and ego. Thus in all, there are twenty-four elements.

Through the five organs of perception we gain knowledge of the external world; sound, touch, form, taste and smell are the attributes of the ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose. The five organs of action are responsible for all external physical activities such as walking, speech, procreation, excretion and physical work. The five pranas are responsible for inhalation and exhalation, digestion, elimination, sensory perception, circulation and maintenance of the body. The four internal principles of mind, consciousness, intellect and ego enable us to be aware of our internal world of thought, feeling, emotions, reasoning, willing, desiring, etc. These are the twenty-four principles which constitute matter, or prakriti, in which the consciousness is lying hidden like fire in wood.

The purpose of yoga is to withdraw our consciousness which is imprisoned in the cage of matter. Purusha, or consciousness, is to be withdrawn from the cage of the body through the practice of yogic exercises and through meditation.

Withdrawal of consciousness

When the consciousness manifests itself through the body, it superimposes upon itself the attributes of the body, mind and intellect, and it begins to feel pain, pleasure, heat, cold, hunger,

thirst, which in essence belong only to the body and mind. Yoga prescribes a series of practices through which the consciousness detaches itself from the influence of the body and mind and realizes its inherent bliss and unconditioned nature.

Meditation is a systematic and organized technique for detachment of the consciousness. People feel that the moment they close their eyes they start to meditate, but this is not so. Meditation is the process which enables you to realize the consciousness within you. How can we realize this awareness in us when our minds are so extroverted? We will have to discover some method for ourselves through which we can successfully withdraw our consciousness from the external world.

The world of objects and events reaches us through the doors of perception, consisting of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. Just as the tortoise withdraws its limbs at will, similarly, through yogic practices, the mind and senses are to be withdrawn from their respective objects. When all the doors of perceptions are closed, your mind will communicate with the consciousness inside. But the senses are so turbulent and mischievous that they do not allow us to commune with the consciousness within. They are very powerful and drag the mind off the track, making it impossible to concentrate on the object. The *Bhagavad Gita* very aptly describes this: “Just as a powerful wind tosses a small boat in various directions and prevents it from reaching its destination, in the same way, the turbulent senses mislead the mind and do not allow it to get a glimpse of the divine self.”

Therefore, in yoga emphasis is always given to control of the body, pranas, senses and mind. Through hatha yoga the body is controlled. Through pranayama the vital airs are controlled. Through japa yoga and trataka, the consciousness is withdrawn from the external world; this is known as pratyahara.

Expansion of consciousness

The whole process of yoga can be divided into two parts. The first part is the negation of outer consciousness, and the

second part is expansion of inner consciousness. The first part of yoga aims at shutting, closing the doors of perception, and the second part of yoga provides a direction to the released consciousness, which expands till it becomes infinite.

The second stage can be practised when the first stage has been perfected. To make it clearer, when the withdrawal of consciousness is complete, you should take up the process of expansion of consciousness.

The withdrawal and expansion of consciousness can be achieved with the help of a mantra. Every mantra has two aspects: name and form. The name and sound aspect will withdraw your consciousness from the external world. This is the process of negation. The form or symbol aspect will expand your inner consciousness till it merges in self-awareness. It must be borne in your mind that both the name and form aspects of mantra are to be practised. If you repeat only the mantra, but do not concentrate on a form, you will enter into unconsciousness. And if you neglect name or sound and concentrate only on the form or symbol, you will have to struggle lifetime after lifetime.

As such, it is stated by Sage Patanjali in the *Yoga Sutras* that through repetition of name or mantra, you bring about that state of withdrawal where you forget everything that is taking place outside. You have transcended the outer consciousness, but now what are you going to do? You have taken a jump into the ocean, but if you do not know how to swim, you are going to drown. Therefore, when you have withdrawn your consciousness to one point through the name or sound aspect of mantra, unless you take up the form or symbol aspect and allow your consciousness to stabilize itself at one point, you will surely land up in unconsciousness.

There are many forms to choose from. When your mind has become completely blank and there is absolute emptiness inside, you should take up a suitable form or symbol to meditate on. It is with the help of that form or symbol that the expansion of consciousness takes place.

A true student of yoga

When the expansion of consciousness occurs, the fourth dimension of consciousness is experienced, and that can manifest itself through any form; it may be a flower, a person, a triangle, an animal or anything. When the fourth dimension of consciousness manifests, one loses the sense of differentiation. Then the medium which brought this expansion assumes reality and appears to occupy space and exist in time. The consciousness becomes one with the medium, giving deep insight into its nature. One becomes fully convinced that all mediums are nothing but forms of consciousness.

When a person gets direct realization of this experience, the scriptures state that the person attains liberation. This liberation is not the salvation of the Bible, nor is it the nirvana of Buddha, nor the moksha of Vedanta. This liberation is complete freedom from the tensions, agonies, sufferings of this life. This state can be achieved by anyone belonging to any stage of life. By the practice of this yoga, wherever you are, you are accepted as a true student of yoga.

A way of life

There are two purposes of yoga. The positive purpose is the experience of peace and bliss, whereas the negative purpose is the elimination of suffering from the subconscious. Though the aim of yoga is liberation, it should be understood that there are many basic human urges and the key to their fulfilment also lies within yoga. Therefore, you should accept yoga as a way of life.

If we give half an hour or forty-five minutes in the morning to yoga, we are trying to make our life more complete, more perfect. If we have heaters, coolers, vacuum cleaners and so many things in order to give us peace, rest and comfort, let us also accept yoga as a means to peace and harmony of body, mind and soul.

5

Relationship Between Mind and Senses

Gita School of Yoga, Melbourne, Australia, 5 May 1968.

It is important to understand the relationship between the mind and the senses. The senses bring stimuli to the mind through ida and pingala nadis, known in modern terminology as the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. In order to create tranquillity in the mind, which is the main centre in yoga, the sensory activities of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems have to be inhibited, so that the higher centres of the brain become awakened.

It is very difficult to disassociate the mental consciousness from the sensory impulses and the sensory awareness because we have been dealing with them for a long time. But when the mind is completely disassociated from the sense impulses, it becomes separate and uninfluenced by the current karma. When the consciousness is distinct, and without any association with the senses, then the mind can be experienced in its universal aspect, which is called *hiranyagarbha* or golden egg.

Hiranyagarbha is an ancient term found in the Vedas and Upanishads, which means the collective consciousness, universal consciousness or supermind. The same concept is also known as *Brahma*, the infinite, the creator, the universal mind. *Brahma*, the creator, created the Vedas. In the same way, the universal mind is the creator for the yogi. It creates knowledge; the manifestation of jnana is an outcome of the

universal mind. This universal mind is nothing but a state of complete freedom of the mind from the sense connections.

The golden egg is existing in your body. You will have to find out that place, just as you find out the location of the different chakras. There must come a time in your sadhana, in your yogic practices, when the sense experiences will not concern you at all; they will not matter. You will only be aware of the homogeneous existence which is Brahma, hiranyagarbha, the collective mind or universal consciousness.

If you have transcended the sense experiences, but at the same time you have entered into a state of blankness, you are not on the right path. However, if you have transcended the sense experiences and you have become aware of the entire existence, the fantastic thoughts of the whole mind in its many aspects, then you are on the right path only after awareness of the mind has been attained, then only can you transcend the mind and go beyond in spiritual life.

Two mental attitudes

What we are talking about is *pratyahara*, which is an act of disassociation of the sense impulses from the mind. However, concentration, intense effort and working hard to focus the mind will not give any positive results at this stage. It may appear to you that you are hurrying up the whole process, but ultimately you will realize that you will not be able to walk further.

Each *indriya*, or sense organ, is a channel which contributes to the influence in the brain. If one of the channels is obstructed, the mental experience becomes very keen. Usually, when people do their work, they are not at all aware of their mental problems and distractions, although they are there. However, at night, when all the work is finished and they sit down for meditation, all the thoughts start coming. It is not because thoughts only come at night, the thoughts were there during the day also, but at that time the sense channels were not obstructed. Everything was functioning, and so you were not aware of what was going on inside of you. The *vritti*, the mental attitude, was extrovert.

At night all the sense channels withdraw, and it is at that time that you become aware of the troubles and anxieties. In the same way, the obstruction of the passages of experience that contribute to the activities of the brain is one of the methods of stimulating the consciousness, *samskaras* and *vasanas*. It is like an act of digging. In this practice we are obstructing the sense organs. One by one, all these channels should be obstructed, not in order to inhibit them, but to enable us to sit quietly and see the fantastic panorama of awareness inside, which at present is not available to us due to our extrovert tendency.

The mind functions under two attitudes: *bahiranga mukha vritti*, the external attitude, and *antaranga mukha vritti*, the internal attitude. The external attitude has its basis in the sense organs, and through this attitude the mind becomes extrovert. In *Kathopanishad* it is said, "Man does not see the higher self because his consciousness is drawn to the external objects by the *indriyas* (senses) and, in fact, the *indriyas* are the root cause of this extrovert tendency of the mind."

If you light a candle and at the same time you keep the fan running, the flame can never become steady. In the same way, it is written in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "Just as a lamp can remain absolutely steady in a place without any breeze or wind, so the practitioner of yoga should try to avoid the cause of that wind or breeze which brings about mental fluctuations."

It is also said in the *Gita* that the consciousness is constantly fluctuating because that is its nature. There are two things which bring about absolute quietness. One is persistent practice (*abhyasa*), and the other is complete detachment from the insignificant, irrelevant and meaningless affairs of life (*vairagya*). Further in the *Gita* it is said, "Even as a tortoise withdraws its limbs inside when they are not required, in the same way the yogi has to withdraw his *indriyas* from the objects of the senses. Then his awareness becomes steady, otherwise not."

The *Gita* also says, "That which is night for all living beings is the time when the yogi is awake. And when all

beings are awake, it is night for the yogi.” This means that when the senses are aware of the sense objects, it is day for all living beings, but for the yogi it is night because he does not see himself. When the senses are withdrawn completely and all beings are asleep, it is day for the yogi because the consciousness is awake.

In *Ramacharitamanas*, the same thing is written: “When the mind is withdrawn from the insignificant objects of life, that is actually the awakening of the soul.” In the same context, in the *Gita* we read: “When you do not feed your senses, the awareness of the sense objects is diminished, but the taste remains.” Taste means craving, a very subtle kind of thirst. Even that longing and craving disappears when you become aware of yourself.

Intensifying your mental power

Antaranga mukha vritti is the mental attitude directed inside. In this state the mind sees itself or whatever it can visualize without the help of the senses. In bahiranga mukha vritti, the sense organs are responsible; in antaranga mukha vritti, it is the absence of the stimuli presented by the sense organs which is responsible. For example, the instruction to refrain from touching is nothing but an act of blocking one of the important channels of extroversion.

Many mahatmas and saints live in remote areas of the Himalayas where they can maintain the voluntary internal attitude of the senses and visualize their mind investigating the homogeneous mind, and then proceed on through the path of yoga. Of course, it must be understood that it is only a means, not the end. It is not the behaviour, but a kind of treatment of the mind.

Out of the twenty-four hours, except for the blessed hours of sleep, our eyes are always open, because it is the tendency of these organs to remain open and exposed to every shadow that comes in front of them.

The eyes are connected through the optic nerves with bindu, the cranial plexus, which gives light to both eyes.

When your eyes are open, bindu is in constant excitement, and when you close them, bindu is in equanimity, tranquillity, quietness. At the beginning, when you want to close your eyes for meditation, you feel sleepy because this is how the mind has been trained. Closed eyes means sleep; open eyes means awake.

This habit can be broken, so that with the eyes closed you can look within. After some time, you will see that the natural tendency to sleep, to enter into dreams, or to see visions when the eyes are closed is broken, and you will begin to visualize internally whatever you can. The capacity of inner perception is increased so much that the thoughts become very powerful and clear to you.

The five *jnanendriyas*, or senses of knowledge (the ears, eyes, nose, tongue, skin), are connected through the sensory nerves, or sympathetic nervous system, with the higher centres of the brain. Similarly, the five *karmendriyas*, or senses of action (the hands, feet, tongue, excretory and reproductive organs), are connected through the motor nerves, or parasympathetic nervous system, with the higher brain centres. In yogic language we say that they are connected by *ida* and *pingala* with the brain, and when you control them, you are intensifying your mental power.

Meditation is not a process

This act of sense control is also called *pratyahara*. The senses feed the mind and, in turn, the mind feeds the senses. In *pratyahara* we are trying to separate these two principles from each other. If your *pratyahara* becomes successful, then you may practise *dharana*, concentration, and that will take you to *dhyana*, spontaneous meditation.

The phrases: I am going to meditate, I have been meditating for a long time, I had a good meditation, are absolutely incorrect. According to all the great experts, meditation cannot be practised; it arises by itself. It is not a process; it is a stage. You cannot know how to attain *dhyana* and *samadhi*. You can only know how to practise *pratyahara*.

If you are able to continue japa yoga for one and a half minutes without any thought interruption, it means your pratyahara has entered into dharana. At present this is not possible, as you know by experience how difficult it is to maintain awareness of one object for a long time, without any thought intervention. Even if you are aware of only one particular thought which is related to the object of your concentration, still it is an associated thought. In dharana, even these associated thoughts should not come.

If you continue concentration on one item for one or one and half minutes without any intervention, that is called one dharana. Again after intervention, if you continue the same thought uninterrupted for one or one and a half minutes, that means the second dharana is completed. If you continue this eleven times, you have completed pratyahara and entered the stage of dharana. Eleven durations of dharana will take you to dhyana. That means, if you are able to continue awareness of one object for a certain period, eleven times, that becomes dhyana, the true state of meditation, which will itself, naturally culminate in samadhi, self-realization, the goal of yoga and the zenith of man's spiritual evolution.



6

Press Conference, Sydney

Sydney Airport, Sydney, Australia, 7 October 1976.

Is this your first trip to Australia?

It is the third; I was here in 1968 and 1969.

When practising yoga, how important is it to maintain a positive mental attitude?

Even if one doesn't have a positive mental attitude, one will develop it through the practice of yoga. It is not the positive mental attitude that is necessary for yoga; it is yoga that is necessary for a positive mental attitude.

What is the main message, the main purpose of yoga?

To develop better control over the mind, and to make it more creative.

How can yoga increase one's knowledge of oneself?

By practising it, by emulating it, by living it.

How do you live it though?

You have the practices of yoga, the technical and the practical aspects, which you must practise every day for some time so that you can develop the body and mind, and bring about coordination between both.

You seem to be most concerned that our lifestyle is making more of us suffer and trust each other less. How can yoga help to change that situation?

Yoga is going to change that situation. The picture is very dark because people come to yoga in a confused state of mind. Once they have taken to yoga, their minds will evolve. In time they will all change and unity will be established.

Are there many world leaders, top politicians, who practise yoga?

There certainly are. Of course, I don't know every one, but there are leaders all over the world practising yoga. Even if they are not practising, they are convinced of the effective role of yoga in the mental makeup of man.

Is yoga a religion?

No. It is definitely a science. Of course, ultimately a person may accept yoga in the background of his own religion.

But it does have spiritual overtones, doesn't it?

Certainly. When the mind evolves, it becomes a spiritual matter.

Is there any conflict between yoga and the established religions?

There should not be. Just as there is no conflict between biology and Christianity. One is a science, the other is a religion. Just as science is necessary for man, religion is also necessary.

How can yoga be applied in everyday western life, say for a businessman?

Just by practising it. He must find some time for the practice of yoga, either in the morning or evening, as it may be convenient.

What can it do for him?

Let him practise for half an hour to one hour daily and he will find out.

It sounds as though it's got a lot to do with the state of mind.

I think man is mind. The body only carries it.

When you said that yoga can make a man more creative, what did you mean?

The limitations of the mind must be removed. You see, in everyday society there are limited minds, there are unlimited minds, and there are potential minds.

So you mean that if a man did yoga very well and he wasn't good at mathematics, he could become a brilliant mathematician?

Certainly. A brilliant mathematician, a brilliant scientist, a great swami.

Can you demonstrate some of your energy-producing techniques?

I will get one of your Australian swamis here to demonstrate. Will someone perform vajrasana and shashankasana? This is a most important pose. It checks nervous depression if practised every day. Nervous depression comes to us in our daily life due to overstrain and stress. It is definitely one of today's major maladies.

What is yoga?

Yoga is a system of harmonizing the mind and the body, and blending the activities of both.

How can the energy-producing techniques be applied in everyday life?

They should be practised every day.

But if you want to draw on them in a moment of anxiety or need to produce the energy that you require, what sort of exercise could you do?

There are various exercises, but shashankasana is one of the best.

What is it about this posture that gives one relief?

First of all, the adrenal glands are activated, so more blood is sent to the extremities of the brain, causing an increase in oxygen conduction. When the conduction of oxygen is greater, the heart becomes more active, and checks depression.

Outside today, one of your followers was a crippled boy in a wheelchair. What can yoga do for him?

We can teach him asanas, pranayama and all kinds of yoga.

But can you make him well again?

Certainly.

Will he be able to get out of that wheelchair and walk?

If he cooperates, he will be alright. It is the patient who has to cooperate and do the practices.

How many followers of yoga are there throughout the world?

Millions. Yoga is a very popular culture. It is a very popular science. There are very few people in the world who do not know about yoga.

Has yoga any political aspirations?

No, because yoga brings about an evolution of the mind, thereby transcending political ambitions. Political ambitions belong to the lower category of evolution, not the higher category.

What can yoga do for people at an international level?

Yoga is a universal science. You can teach it in all countries, in the schools and public institutions. You can have special academics for yoga. That's what can be done internationally.

Is yoga more of a physical than a mental thing?

It is physical as well as mental. After all, when yoga has to cater to the needs of the whole human being, it should cater to his physical as well as his mental needs.

Yoga has a definite ritual about it. Is it a religion? Are you a religious man?

Yoga is not a religion. Yoga is a science. As you study any science like biology, anatomy or physiology, you can study yoga also.

What about the ritual that goes along with it? Is that absolutely necessary?

Not at all. Rituals depend upon the individual.

For instance, why do you wear that particular colour?

This is the colour of a sannyasin, which signifies that we are dedicated to a purpose which concerns the evolution of the inner personality.

Do you get any physical vibrations from that colour?

Definitely, we get vibrations of purity, strength and an undaunted will to live.

Why do you shave your head?

In order to facilitate meditation, to be more receptive at the time of communion with the inner self.

How does shaving the head help you do this?

This concerns the science of magnetism. When you have no hair, then you receive a greater amount of cosmic energy in the brain. During the period of meditation this energy helps you to maintain the height of consciousness.

One of the greatest problems facing our society is hypertension, stress and heart attacks. What help can yoga be in this?

There is no better remedy for stress and strain than yoga.

An average businessman might not like to wear the gear and shave his head. How can he get into yoga in a way that is acceptable to him?

He has to remain a businessman and practise the postures and other techniques at home. Then he will get rid of his problems.

How much will it increase his efficiency?

It depends upon how much practice he does. If the business, executives and administrators devote some of their time to yoga, even if they do not develop efficiency, they can go a long way towards preventing stress, strain, nervous breakdown, hypertension and so forth.

Do you think we would have a better world if there was a movement amongst politicians to practise yoga?

I believe that politicians must practise yoga. Thereby their consciousness will evolve and they will be able to look at the problems of the world from a better, greater and more powerful angle.

Which is more important, the mind or the body?

Both are important for each other. The mind is important, but the body carries it.

How many days will you be here in Sydney?

Ten days.

How much travelling around the world do you do?

Almost every month I am travelling to South America, Europe, Africa, around India and to other places.

Who pays your fares?

I have hundreds of thousands of good friends all over the world.

You don't have any financial problems?

I have no financial problems. I have no personal bank account anywhere in the world. I don't own a penny. I have no money or property. From one angle I'm a beggar.

I have no bank account of my own, no personal property, no relatives.

You have no wife?

No, not at all, never. I don't need one.

Why do you not need a wife?

A wife is not the need of every man. A wife is a social compulsion. Society has created a tradition of marriage, so everybody follows it. Tomorrow society will change and maybe people will not have husbands and wives anymore.

What about the economic problems some countries have, unemployment and so forth. Can yoga be of some help in solving these sorts of mass problems?

I don't know very much about economics, but I know that yoga can bring about a great change in the mind. Then man can find the way for himself.

You don't think there is any conflict between yoga and traditional Christian ethics?

No, ethics has its own system and yoga has its own system. There cannot be any contradiction.

Would yoga encourage people to drop out of normal day-to-day life and lead a life of tranquillity without working?

No. Yoga believes in hard work, an alert and disciplined mind and a balanced personality. Everything we do should be creative, not destructive. Yoga talks about the evolution of the human mind and body, so naturally it is never in disagreement with any religion or science.

Is the physical fitness aspect very important in yoga?

Not necessarily. If one is physically unfit and takes to yoga, one becomes fit. Fitness is not important for yoga but yoga is important for fitness.

Are there any strict rules that govern diet in yoga?

Not at all. You see, yoga is for sick people, and therefore, different dietary restrictions will apply according to the sickness. Yoga is also for people who spend long hours in meditation for inner communion or for awareness of the inner soul. There should be some restrictions then because long hours of meditation can bring down the inner temperature of the body. If you eat a heavy meal when the inner temperature is down, it will impair your digestive system.

Could you suggest a quick exercise that people could do to convince them that yoga can bring about some positive changes in their lives?

First of all, they should practise an asana series known as surya namaskara. After that, they should sit quietly, close their eyes and concentrate on the normal and natural breath for as long as they can. That is the exercise with which meditation begins. Just close the eyes and concentrate on the breath that flows through the nostrils. After a short time the body and mind will become calm and quiet.

How long should they do that for?

Start with five minutes and then increase to fifteen minutes.

What should someone who is a complete novice feel after that?

He will feel totally relaxed as though he has come out of a mental crisis.



7

Radio Interview

Satyananda Ashram, Sydney, Australia, 8 October 1976. Interviewer: Bill Dowsett.

Introduction: Thousands of people from all states of Australia and from overseas countries too are arriving in Sydney for the 20th Convention of the International Yoga Fellowship Movement, which starts tomorrow at the Sydney Showground. The organizers expect about five thousand people to attend and the man they have all come to see and learn from is Satyananda Paramahansa.

His followers see him as a highly enlightened soul living in the physical body, and they phrase it this way: “He is known as Satyananda Paramahansa, but he is much greater than this. He is living in this physical body to help the earthly beings through his spiritual wisdom. We need this gross contact to uplift ourselves from the great sorrow, the great pain in our hearts and the tears of our day-to-day life, as well as the confusions from our minds.”

So, to his followers in his native India, in Australia and in many western countries, Satyananda Paramahansa is no ordinary yoga teacher, but the spiritual leader of a yoga movement which they feel will sweep the world.

Well, that is really quite a build-up. Do you see yourself as basically an ordinary man?

Well, I am a man. I can understand the difficulties, the tensions and the problems of this world. I have shared people's joys and sorrows, and I am able to commune with them. So, you may understand that I am one with man.

From what you are saying, it goes further than that. You are not just an ordinary man.

I would emphasize that I am an ordinary man.

Do you see yourself as having special qualities that most people don't have?

Well, I'm creative, alert and aware of the greater stages of human life, the states of mind which ordinary man cannot experience.

Such as what?

The spiritual and yogic states of mind in which one is in tune with the greater areas of one's personality, where one is able to commune with the experiences of bliss and peace.

For myself and for people living in the western world, it is very difficult to comprehend the full meaning of what you are saying. What does this feel like? What do you experience when you are in this state?

In the East as well as in the West, man is limited by his knowledge, perceptions and cognitions. His area of knowledge is limited and that is why he is not able to understand the possibility of a greater stage of consciousness. Through the process of yoga and meditation, one is able to transcend the limitations of the ordinary mind and thereby have a greater cosmic awareness.

We have come back to cosmic awareness. Can you tell me what it is?

Cosmic awareness is the awareness in which you have the totality of your experience, the totality of your existence

and you are able to comprehend at once the depths of knowledge.

Do you see your life as having a distinct purpose? Do you know where it's going? Do you know what your mission is in life?

I have certainly become aware of the purpose of my life and, at the same time, I have a definite mission which is twofold. One is to become the means of alleviating the deep-rooted sufferings of mankind. The other is to be one with the highest reality that is ever existent.

To get a better understanding of you, let's look at your life in a bit more detail. I understand you were born in 1923, in a small town at the foot of the Himalayas in northern India. What sort of family were you born into? Was it expected that you would become a teacher?

I came from an ordinary family of farmers and landlords. I had a formal education, but when I was young, I had some spontaneous spiritual experiences in which I became aware of something else that I couldn't understand then.

What sort of experiences were these?

I was completely unaware of the sensations of the body. I never knew that I had a body at that time, although I could see it.

What age were you?

I was barely five years old then.

So, at the age of five, you could see your body but not experience any sensations from it. Was this permanent?

No, it would come and go. So my family decided to investigate whether the cause was physical and they consulted many medical experts. Eventually, a saint who came to my town advised my parents that their child should be given a spiritual education, which was done.

When you were older, say as a teenager, were you like other teenagers?

Oh, yes. I had many good friends. I was very good at sports and hunting. I was a poet and an artist. I was interested in everybody, in every science, but at the same time, the same spiritual experience came to me spontaneously now and then, to make me aware of the infinite space within.

If you had been living in the West, people would have been convinced that you had some kind of illness. I mean, if I look at my body and say, “I don’t feel anything and I don’t experience any sensations,” then I’d be off to the hospital before you could blink.

Yes, but if it had been investigated scientifically at the time, perhaps the alpha intensity of my brain waves would have proved that it was not an illness, it was a higher state of mind. I know that even in the West scientists can make a definite distinction between sleep and meditation, between mental illness and higher spiritual states, by measuring the brain waves.

After your normal school education, you had twelve years of spiritual education with your guru. Were those difficult years for you?

I had no difficulty. I lived with my guru for a full twelve years and received every type of spiritual education from him. I led a life of austerity, self-discipline and self-imposed poverty, as you have in Christianity also. Most of my time was spent studying the literature of Eastern and Western religions.

I suppose that most people of that age would have their minds fixed on many worldly things such as sexual behaviour, but I take it from what you were saying earlier about having no feelings or sensations in your body, that you had no sexual interest.

Well, I tried my level best to fix my mind on the worldly life, because I thought that if I did not think about it, perhaps it would be dormant somewhere within me, and would cause

suppression and a kind of split in my personality. But, in spite of my best efforts to push myself into that kind of life, I could not stay there.

That's incredible really, because in this society most would-be ascetics are doing the opposite. For example, they say, "I have sex drive, but I'm going to force my mind to ignore it and concentrate on more spiritual things." But what you appear to be saying is that you were trying to channel your mind into physical things so that it would be the other way around.

Right. You see, I was more keen about spiritual evolution. Nevertheless, I have lived a full life, a complete life. I have the knowledge or total experience of every state of enjoyment. I have not left anything untouched. At the same time, I believe today, as I did many years ago, that these things were not part of my desires or ambitions.

But you have felt these enjoyments and pleasures, as it were, mentally?

Physically too.

So, by meditation you can get the fulfilment and pleasure that people get from eating wonderful food, indulging in sexual behaviour, or whatever, just by mental control? How is this possible?

Pleasure is pleasure. It is only the degree of experience that differs. Pleasure is only the continuity of certain sensations by food, by sex, and by many other things. What the mind gets is a kind of experience. A reaction takes place in the brain and in the nerves, which is experienced by individuals in different degrees of enjoyment. But the pleasure derived from food is not different qualitatively from the enjoyment derived from sex.

To me, they seem quite different. I think that most people listening would think that the sort of enjoyment you get

from the different material things of the world have a different qualitative feeling.

No. They are the same. There is only a difference in quality.

So, therefore, the life of an ascetic, a recluse, is not difficult for you?

No, I believe the life that people are leading in the world is more difficult.

Therefore, the sacrifice for you is to come to a country like Australia and appear on a program like this?

Yes, it is a bit more difficult. The people of this country and of every technologically advanced Western country face problems of a mental quality – tensions, schizophrenia, stresses, mental diseases and imbalances. They have a lot of problems which they have to work out, and it is for this purpose that they have called me to conduct this Yoga Convention.

After twelve years with your guru, I understand that you went on a long pilgrimage, in which you covered the entire Indian subcontinent. What did you hope to achieve by this?

I wanted to see how people live in the world, to understand their difficulties, and to discover how I could serve them and love them.

After living such a sheltered life, were you distressed and surprised by the amount of problems that ordinary people were facing?

No. Even during those twelve years when I lived with my guru, I was in touch with people of all continents, because my master, Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, was a famous man. People of the world used to come to him and I used to meet them. So I was aware, in a way, of the distress of mankind. But later, when I was moving all over India, all over the world, I lived with the people and shared their joys as well as sorrows.

Did you change your view on life, experiencing these sorts of things at a grassroots level, at a practical level?

Well, I had to know how I could make them free from their problems, how I could help them.

And I understand you did that by spending three years in total isolation?

Yes. I retired for three years. I did not meet anyone, and I stabilized the highest state of consciousness.

What does that mean?

This state of consciousness, which we call cosmic consciousness, has to be stabilized. You remain in the deepest state of meditation for long hours without being aware of your own existence, or of time, space and objectivity. You are just in complete awareness of the totality. I was in this state for months and years.

At the same time, I was reflecting and investigating the mind as to the origin of such things as passion, hatred, jealousy and nervous depression. Why does a man feel depression in his mind? What is pain? What is distress? I witnessed these and all kinds of things that man has been suffering from. I wanted to discover the exact cause and nature of these things. For that purpose I retired for a few years.

You were living in what we could call solitary confinement in a little underground cell. You were totally isolated. How did you go about discovering the causes of what had puzzled mankind for thousands of years?

Through reflection. You can visualize, recognize, become aware of the mental processes by raising your mind a little higher than this normal one.

I just can't understand it. I can hear the words you are saying, but I can't visualize it in my mind.

It is not possible now, but it is possible when you are able to evolve your mind to the psychic field. Just as scientists are

able to visualize, scientifically, phenomena such as laser beams and electromagnetic fields which cannot be seen by the naked eye, the scientist of yoga, the yogic thinker, visualizes an idea in the intuitive field or the psychic field.

When you are reflecting on the basic problems that mankind is facing now, are you assisted by other spiritual entities? Is it just your own mind sorting over these problems in this meditative way, or is it other spiritual entities coming in and giving advice, help and support?

Personally speaking, I believe that these spiritual entities are really my own higher faculties, and they did help me.

What are these other spiritual entities which you see as your own higher faculties? How do they present themselves to you?

The individual has dormant faculties. They may be, say, spiritual beings. At a particular stage of mind they manifest themselves. They come in the form of voices, visions, angels, as you call them in religion, and as sudden intuitive flashes. So, since I am a master of the pen, I can write these things spontaneously for hours together. These divine, higher spiritual faculties guide my pen, my speech, and my emotions as well.

Yet, you see these as part of yourself, and not as outside elements. Would these visions be ghosts, as we call them in the West? Are they material things that you can see with colour, form and shape, people who talk to you, or what?

The mind is very powerful. It can duplicate itself. You can see it in the form of a ghost, an angel, an object. The mind has infinite potentiality. It can even create matter.

Does it create matter or does it create hallucinations that appear as matter?

It can create hallucinations too, but the more powerful mind can create matter.

Have you seen it done? Can you do it yourself?

Yes. I have created many things in my life. But I think we should leave this topic because we will be diverting the listeners from the main topic, which is yoga.

Let's go back to your cell. Did you have a conscious feeling of the passage of time? Were you surprised that you'd been in there for three years?

I was definitely aware of what had happened and I knew three years had passed.

Did you feel any strain, or frustration, or worry at any time that, "Here I am and it has been three years since I have spoken to anyone"?

Well, my life has only been missing one thing. I had never had an experience of pain, frustration, disappointment or discontentment. I have tried a number of times to impose these things on myself, just to have an experience of them, but I can't do it because somehow or other I have transcended them.

In your younger life, you were a person who did not believe in God. You subsequently changed from being an atheist to a spiritual person. What persuaded you that you were wrong?

I used to study philosophy, Indian and Western, including dialectic materialism. So I thought that God and religion were all rubbish, that they were created by political brains or social thinkers. I refused to believe in God, spirit, reincarnation, ethics and morality.

When I came to my guru, I was an atheist. As time passed and I practised yoga, I thought that in meditation you could only experience *shoonyata*, the void, and nothing else, just a blank. That was my ultimate philosophy. But my master said, "No. The divine experience is not nothing. It is a totality of experience, a complete experience." He also told me that I must have love, devotion and faith in God.

Did you believe him when he said that?

I heard him, but I didn't believe. It took me six full years to understand. Then I had visions, I heard voices, I had instructions, and I knew that my guru was right and that I had been wrong during those years. How could I, a puny person, deny without having the knowledge of the totality? There must be a God, a creator. There must be higher things in life, even though I may not have seen them.

Some people would say that you can achieve the same spiritual insights by means of LSD and other hallucinogenic drugs. What is your experience of that, and what are your feelings about it?

To those people I would say, "No!" Not because I am a fanatic of the spiritual life and yoga, but because I have used those drugs myself many years ago. Not LSD, of course, because it was not known to us then, but I used other chemicals for a full nine months. They certainly altered the state of my consciousness, but they did not change the consciousness.

You see, making a little impact on the consciousness is different from the evolution of consciousness. Yoga aims at the evolution of consciousness, not at inflicting a little change. The mind and consciousness are two different things. All these drugs alter the state of mind, the external experience, but the spiritual experience cannot be brought about by them in any way.

From the moment you realized your guru was right, that God existed, that the ultimate experience was not just a blank, a void, has your faith ever become shaken?

Never. That was realization for me.

Did it happen suddenly in a flash?

Yes, suddenly, like a flash, overnight. For hours together I could not sleep. I was only aware of one idea, "God, love; God, faith".

Would you say that yoga is a religion in itself or is it a means of using the religion you have?

Yoga is not a religion. But a person who has a religion, who has faith in God may use yoga for successful devotion, for a successful spiritual life, for disciplining the body and mind.

You said that the only way for the world to achieve harmony and understanding is to look to yoga. Is that the only answer?

The people of the world who have been working for creativity and enjoyment will have to come to yoga in order to lead a better, fuller and more satisfying life, because yoga is not negation, it is acceptance.

As you know, many people in the West say that the only way to spiritual fulfilment is through Christianity.

I would not say anything against that, except that in Christianity the yogic aspect has to be made more predominant, more effulgent and more expressive. After all, Christianity is not anti-yoga, and yoga is not anti-Christian.

What do you think yoga has to offer on a practical level to the people who are listening right now, who obviously may not be able to spend the countless hours of devotion and study that you have spent on yoga?

Those who are really keen to benefit themselves must set apart half an hour to one hour every morning for practising a few yoga postures, pranayamas and then some concentration and meditation.

So, it's going to take one hour a day?

If they can manage it. But if not one hour, half an hour will help bring them nearer to themselves. Man is very far from himself today. He doesn't know where he is. His awareness of himself is not effulgent.

But you know where you are?

Of course.

8

Yoga of the 1980s

*20th International Yoga Convention, Sydney Showground, Australia,
9 October 1976.*

By welcoming me, you are welcoming yourself. I am an Australian. My spirit, my feelings and my heart live here because I have discovered spiritual Australia, and this discovery will go down in history. Columbus discovered America and thought it was India. In the same way, I did not at first realize the depth of spirituality that was in Australia.

When I first came here in 1968, on the invitation of Swami Nirmalananda (Roma Blair), I thought that the physical aspect of yoga was the only quest of Australians, but I was mistaken. Gradually I discovered that it is the spiritual quest which people are dedicated to. I realized that Australians were greatly interested in yoga, and that we should have yoga centres and yoga ashrams throughout the country.

I came here again in 1969 and attended the first Yoga Convention in Australia. Ever since then the people of this country have been pouring into my ashram in India on the spiritual quest. Year after year, many of you have come. After some time we thought of having an ashram here and now we have it. Then we thought of having a convention and today we are here. The discovery began in 1968 and the credit goes to Swami Nirmalananda. She brought me to Australia, and she brought yoga and the spirit of yoga.

The spiritual quest

The most important thing is the spiritual quest, and that is going to be the yoga of the 1980s, which we inaugurate today. Man has to find himself, all of you and me too. We are very far from ourselves, and that is the tragedy, that is the painful thing. Man has been able to discover matter, but he hasn't been able to discover the spirit. It is necessary to have a thorough knowledge of matter, but matter alone does not give us an everlasting life.

Where do we stand? Where do we go from here? Why have we come? And why do we exist? We must give a solid purpose to our life. We don't just appear like plants and animals, without a mission. Every individual has a mission, a purpose. If he has no purpose, the whole of creation, the whole of existence, all philosophy and all religions are completely baseless and purposeless. By living a life in total ignorance of its purpose, we are negating the philosophies, we are contradicting the religions. The means have become the purpose.

Therefore, we have to reflect and question at least once a day, "Why have I come? Why do I exist? What should my purpose be? Am I only this much, or am I greater than what I appear to be? Am I the body? Am I this physical structure, or is there a greater reality that is within me? How am I going to attune myself?" That is the yoga of the 1980s, if not elsewhere, then definitely in Australia.

All of you will have to make a shift from the superficial concept of yoga to the traditional and real concept. Yoga for beauty, yoga for trimming the body, that was the yoga of the 1970s. Yoga for the evolution of the entire mass consciousness is the yoga of the 1980s. This is the most difficult thing that I have to put before you.

Yoga can make you wonderfully fit physically. It can control the hormonal reactions within the body, within a week, a month or perhaps three months. But when you practise the yoga by which you see the inner life, it will take time, and you must prepare yourself for this experience. During this

convention I will try my best to put before you a glimpse of those practices by which you will realize the substratum of your existence. These practices are known as yoga.

The way is meditation

Yoga means meeting or union. It is a state where you are united and have become attuned with the real existence. For this, the way is meditation, that is the express highway. Just as in driving you have red and green lights, you drive in first, second or third gear, and often in reverse, and you have the occasional accident. So in yoga, the expressway is meditation, never forget it.

Yoga is meditation and meditation is yoga. It is point of experience when everything becomes shooonya. Everything is withdrawn as it is every night during sleep, but the consciousness is awake inside, it is not asleep. It is not the 'I' that is awake inside; it is the consciousness without name, without form, without dimension, without any definition, without demarcation of land, without any demarcation of the body. It is the light, it is the experience, and as I told you, meditation is the way. Every spiritual seeker, every devotee of yoga, every aspirant who is devoted to any spiritual path should not forget that meditation, dhyana yoga, is the way to that experience.

When cognition is extroverted, you have perception, you see matter, you see the vast world with its names and forms in all its diversity, sometimes logical and sometimes illogical. When the perception is extroverted, you experience that world of names and forms, subject to change, to actions and reactions, to emotions and feelings. This same perception still functions when it is withdrawn from matter and fixed on an inner symbol. When the mind is comparatively tranquillized and the sensual activities minimized, when the pranas function in balance, when the body becomes steady and the awareness of the inner symbol becomes constant, then meditation begins. That is the yoga of the 1980s.

The purpose of yoga

We are not sitting here in this convention to promote yoga or a yoga institution; that is not our purpose. Our purpose is to listen, to think and to learn the way by which each one of us shall be able to withdraw ourselves to the innermost temple of our life, where a great power resides. Man is very powerful, his mind is very powerful, but more powerful than his body and his mind is his spirit.

Have you ever experienced the spirit? This is a question you will have to answer. You have experienced pain, happiness, separation, love, hatred, jealousy, greed and so forth. You have the experience of dreams. But have you experienced the self? What is the spirit? What is the self? What is the atman? What is that higher state of consciousness which is beyond this body and mind? When you are there, what happens? What is the difference between that state of life and this state of existence?

Man has to know one thing, that the world and the unhappiness of the world cannot come to an end. Therefore, with all my sincerity and with all my feeling, I dedicate this day to this pledge, to this resolve, that side by side with our daily lives, we will try our utmost to attune ourselves to our real nature, our true self, and that during this convention we shall try our level best to maintain the spiritual meaning of yoga and the sanctity which the word carries.

I request all the speakers and practitioners not to degrade yoga from its real purpose. If you want to look beautiful, there are beauty salons; please go there. Don't come to a yoga ashram. If you want to trim your body, there are centres of physiotherapy and other places; please go there. The purpose of yoga must be the evolution of your consciousness. If you are not interested in your spiritual evolution, then you should seek another place.

It is with this spirit that we started a small ashram at Mangrove Mountain, which we are going to develop for all those spiritual seekers who will come to stay there. Ashram life is very important. The expression of the energy in the

form of karma yoga is necessary for spiritual enlightenment. The working out of karma, of the impurities in the mind, is a very important part of spiritual practice.

When you go to the ashram and stay for a week or two, you will have time to reflect, to participate and to be one with the atmosphere. For meditation, as well as for anything else, it is important that you have the right atmosphere, the right vibrations. The spiritual vibrations which are created in an ashram by the people who practise yoga there are helpful for the people who come after them.

A yoga ashram should not function like a business house. Of course, the exchange of money and so forth is necessary for the running of an institution, but that is not the purpose of an ashram. If yoga becomes a means of livelihood, then it is a profession, and then it is just as good or as bad as any other profession. Yoga has just one purpose, please remember, not two. The purpose of yoga is to deliver mankind from the pangs of difficulties.

Therefore, yoga is a liberating force; it should not be a binding force. It liberates mind from matter and the spirit from the mind. In physics you liberate energy from matter and an explosion takes place. In the same way, body, mind and spirit are completely fused together and these three elements must be separated from each other. That is liberation, that is moksha, that is nirvana.

This separation takes place only in meditation and nowhere else. If you want to separate mind from spirit, spirit from mind, mind from body and body from mind, you cannot do it intellectually. Philosophical and intellectual analysis is not enough. In Samkhya philosophy, the purusha and prakriti have to be separated. Matter is in energy and energy is in matter and they are dormant.

Consciousness and matter function together in us, and when they function together, there is an earthly experience, a worldly experience; there is a pain, duality, rebirth, karma; there is difficulty. By the process of meditation, the two elements in our existence, consciousness and matter, are

separated from each other and that is the sole purpose of yoga. When these three – matter, consciousness and energy – are separated from each other, that is moksha, nirvana, samadhi, shoenyata. That is the higher vision and that has to be materialized. We must prepare ourselves for that experience. Meditation is the way and that is what must emanate from the yoga of the 1980s.

An international heritage

On this day last year, I was in South America for our Yoga Convention in Bogota, Colombia. Thereafter, I toured the whole of South America, and everywhere I found people asking about just one thing: How to know myself, how to achieve samadhi, how to have internal communion, how to reach the inner temple? Time and again those devoted Christians asked me these and many other questions. Not only in South America, Australia, India or the Middle East, but all over the world, including the Eastern European countries, people are asking about the same thing.

Man is waiting, man is asking the way. The people of our century and of our decade have become aware that they must know the man within the man, that they must experience the mind behind the mind, they must experience the basis of experience. There must come a time when all of us should be able to see what 'I' am. That is self-realization. Some call it God-realization, some call it samadhi, others call it moksha, nirvana or communion. Whatever we call it, that is what we must aim for.

Now, I must come to a close. This is a very fine day for an inauguration. I am happy to be here with all of you. You have been very kind to bring me here. At first I was a bit reluctant to come so far, as I have a lot work to do in India. However, as I told you in the beginning, I have a very deep attachment to Australia, and I really love all of you very much and I am sure that you also love me.

I will be here for a few more days and we will have classes on raja yoga, yoga nidra, prana vidya, kundalini yoga, meditation,

and kirtan and bhajan. Singing kirtan is a very important method by which the consciousness can be withdrawn from matter, so it will be an important part of the program. In addition, we have also brought an interesting documentary from South America, which will prove to you that yoga is not exclusively Indian. Yoga is an international subject of self-realization.

Swami Niranjan, who has come here from Colombia, has brought a documentary depicting the yogic civilization there in pre-colonial history. He has been searching through beautiful museums in Mexico and all over South America. He has taken slides which show that thousands of years ago, before this present era in history, there was in South America in general and in Colombia in particular, a yogic culture. You will be surprised to see statues three to four thousand years old, of people practising neti, dhauti, basti, nauli and so on. These statues will show that when you are practising asana and pranayama, you are not practising a science which belongs only to India. Yoga is the heritage of mankind.

The preservation of yoga

Credit goes to India for preserving yoga in times of political upheaval and chaos. In India, the swamis and the sannyasins who wear this geru robe took a pledge, a sankalpa, that they would preserve the science of yoga in its entirety, even if the people of the world didn't want it. That is why the sect was created. This is not a Hindu order, a religious order, nor an Indian order. This is the tradition which dedicated itself to the preservation of higher sciences, the science of yoga, the Samkhya philosophy, because man must have this science. Otherwise, at any time, if political chaos takes grip of a country, the whole culture is destroyed along with its spirituality.

Therefore, in India some wise people separated the swamis, the mendicants, from the society and offered to feed, clothe and sustain them, so they could maintain and preserve the higher values of life. In coming generations, if ever things

became calm and smooth again, then the sannyasins would be able to give this science of higher life back to the people.

For centuries and centuries this yoga was buried. It was in a state of complete decadence. Countries and cultures never knew what it was. Historians were completely ignorant of it. Finally the day has come when there is peaceful administration, and law and order throughout the world, so the sannyasins have come out to give the science of yoga back to the people. But if ever they find that the people don't want yoga, you will no longer see this robe in society.

Therefore, all of you who wear this robe, whether householders or sannyasins, must remember that you bear a responsibility to carry the higher spiritual values of life, to love unity, to be at peace with others and with yourself, to be non-aggressive, silent, humble, grand, noble. This is what you have to be. This is not a social order. Everyone who meditates, who wants to attain samadhi or higher spiritual life, can definitely use this robe as a means and an aid. So, today we inaugurate this culture, this yogic philosophy, which is wanted the world over, as the yoga of the 1980s.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the use of yoga nidra in regard to our day-to-day tensions?

Practise it for yourself and you will have the experience. In daily life we get tired physically, emotionally and mentally. We pile up muscular, emotional and mental tensions. The build-up of those tensions ultimately affects our nervous system, coronary system and digestive system as well. If you practise yoga nidra daily, you can relax those tensions partly, if not completely.

I am suffering from migraine headaches. Can you help me?

First of all, early in the morning, the moment you get out of bed and before making too much physical movement, drink two or three glasses of tepid water and then vomit it out. Do

this for a few weeks, if not regularly, say every third day. That is the first thing.

Secondly, practise neti, where you use a neti pot which has a spout to pass tepid, saline water from one nostril to the other, followed by bhasrika pranayama to dry the nostrils.

Thirdly, to get rid of your migraine, take three or four days off and have a nice time at an ashram where you can practise shankhaprakshalana, total cleansing of the digestive system from top to bottom, from one end to the other.

So, once again, firstly the vomiting, secondly the nose cleaning followed by bhasrika pranayama, and thirdly the total cleansing of the body. After this, your migraine will be finished unless, of course, you have a tumour in the brain.

What can I do about restlessness at work?

You don't like your work, I gather. If you want to enjoy your work, you will have to make it a part of your spiritual life, a part of your sadhana, a part of yoga. If you regard the work you are doing only as a way of earning money, then I can certainly help you with that restlessness. During the time that you are working, you must concentrate on the work, but whenever you have a little time, or a pause in the work, you must repeat your mantra. Also every morning you should do a little more pranayama and with it *kumbhaka* or breath retention.

What is an ashram and what does it do for householders?

Ashram is a Sanskrit word, which means a place of spiritual and physical labour, where the disciples and also the inmates have to put forth a lot of their physical and mental energy in order to work out their karma. The mind is turbulent, and if you do a lot of yogic practices without going through the process of karma yoga which is done in the ashram, then you will have a lot of mental problems. Therefore, the ashram system was created long, long ago, in order to provide a place where the disciples and inmates could live in a community with their guru and express their mental, intellectual, emotional and physical energies in the form of work. Of course, nowadays

we don't have this tradition as it was in the ancient days, but we are trying to revive it.

Here, in Australia, I have asked the ashram to organize things in such a way that spiritually minded people will be able to come and stay for some time, in order to relax the confusions and strangulations of karma. Ashram life is a stepping stone to higher spiritual meditation. It provides you with an opportunity to practise non-attachment. It also provides you with the concept that life can be much simpler than we now think.

At what stage does one have to make the choice between the two paths of void and light? Does the choice depend on personality and inclination? Can the guru advise the appropriate choice?

This question relates to my speech on the first night about the experience of shoonyata which follows meditation and also the experience of light which follows meditation. The choice depends on the disciple's efforts. If the disciple has a basis, a concrete symbol, and if he has thorough control over the mind and consciousness, then he goes through the path of light. But if the disciple has no concrete symbol of his own, if he is in a hurry, and if he is not under the total control of his guru, then he goes through the path of shoonyata.

I feel that the exploration of the spiritual realm comes more easily to an introverted personality than to an extroverted one, whose energy tends to be directed towards others. What appropriate methods has yoga for both personalities?

Spiritual insight or awareness comes to a person who is introverted by nature more quickly than it comes to an extroverted person, but the introverted person will find it more difficult to maintain the continuous flow of awareness required during meditation. Therefore, in yoga and in ashram life we make people extroverted, even those who are introverted by nature. We awaken and widen the scope of their sensory activities. We give them the practices by which

they will develop all the five senses of touch, sight and so on. These have to be made sensitive.

At a particular stage of his evolution, a yogi becomes very extroverted. By this I do not mean that he is given to sensual life, but that he becomes aware of everything which is outside and which can be received or understood by his senses. I believe that those people whose senses are extroverted can reach this spiritual point more easily and quickly than introverted people. Those who are introverted by nature will have to externalize their sensory perceptions, develop them, make them keener and more sensitive, and then introvert them.

In our ashram when I find sannyasins or students who are introverted by nature doing a lot of meditation by themselves, I stop them. I say, "Don't do it, because you do not know how to manipulate the mind; you do not know how to control the mind. You become spontaneously introverted by nature. If your mind dives deep while you are doing a lot of meditation and japa, have you the capacity to bring it back?" Therefore, the mind should not be introverted unless it is first externalized. Introversion is neurotic behaviour and is also a spiritual disqualification.

Yesterday you spoke about finding the right yoga to suit each individual. How does one do this?

Those who are predominantly emotional must accept bhakti yoga, the yoga of devotion and love, as their primary and main spiritual practice, and along with that a little karma yoga, a little raja yoga and a little jnana yoga. Those who are predominantly mystical by temperament will have to accept and practise raja yoga, the yoga of meditation, concentration, contemplation and samadhi. Side by side, they will also have to accept karma yoga, bhakti yoga and jnana yoga as part of their sadhana.

This is how we have to analyze our own temperament and according to this temperamental organization, we have to accept one of the four yogas. Karma yoga is the yoga of action,

work. Bhakti yoga is the yoga of devotion, singing, japa, prayer. Raja yoga is the yoga of meditation. Kundalini yoga, kriya yoga laya yoga, all these come under the heading of raja yoga. Jnana yoga is contemplation, the yoga of thorough self-investigation.

Once you see the temple of truth far off, how long should you let your mind function as to choosing the clearest, quickest path, or who can help you fly?

Well, I have a very short and quick reply to this, because I would consider such a person who has seen or approached the temple of God as my guru. Once you have seen the temple of God, you don't need to question. We will come to you for questioning. Once you obtain not the temple of God itself, but even a vision of it, the questions are answered, the doubts are dispelled and the confusions are rent asunder. The mind becomes very clear, not like the Sydney sky, sometimes sunny and sometimes cloudy, but absolutely bright and clear. Once you have perception of the inner temple of God, you are not only blessed, but thrice blessed, and you don't need to ask any questions.



9

The Inward Journey

*20th International Yoga Convention, Sydney Showground, Australia,
10 October 1976.*

A great deal of thought has been given to meditation as a path to higher knowledge and experience, but the question arises, “How are we to achieve it?” We are sure that meditation is power, and we are convinced that through meditation we will be able to realize the highest, but how do we begin, what is the way?

When we travel by car to a distant place, we have the road, the mileposts and a map. There is fuel in the tank, the vehicle is fit for the journey and we also have a tireless expert driver. In the same way that we set out on an external journey, we would want to set out on an inner journey. However, the inner space is infinite and we don’t know the way. We are also unsure of the milestones; we don’t know what fuel the vehicle uses or who the driver is.

We have to know in detail about the inward flight of consciousness. When the consciousness goes into the inner space, what things does it come across? Is it a total void, *shoonyata*? Does the consciousness pass through a void, does it pass through light, does it pass through visions? Is consciousness aware of itself? Does it maintain its identity of name and form? These are some of the important things which are intimately concerned with your inward travel, with your spiritual journey to the soul.

Starting the journey

The first thing to remember is that we begin from where we are, and we begin on our own initiative. No one else can come to my doorstep and start the journey for me. So, if I belong to tamoguna, I start the journey from the *tamasic* state, the state of laziness, the state of lethargy, the state of procrastination, the state of sleeping and sleeping and sleeping.

If I am a rajasic person, I have to start the journey with my *rajasic* temperament, with dynamic and active qualities of greed, jealousy, passion, acquisition, accomplishment, enjoyment, luxury, have this and have that, and this is nice and that is nice. That is the rajasic temperament. If I am *sattwic* by temperament, I start my journey from my doorstep with knowledge, peace of mind, detachment and non-involvement with the empirical, transitory, insignificant matters of life. I keep myself aloof.

These are the three doorsteps of man and, according to his temperament, each person must pick up a spiritual practice for himself. There is no use saying that everyone should practise pranayama and awaken kundalini, or that everyone should practise this meditation or that meditation, or some other meditation is fantastic for the whole universe. No. It is useless, it is false.

There have been teachers all over the globe emphasizing the one system of meditation for all. It is wrong. There cannot be just one system of meditation. You cannot reach India by taking a road to Melbourne. If you want to go to India, you have a different route. And if you want to go to Tahiti, you have another route again. So it is the same in spiritual life. You have to find the most suitable path.

Everyone has his own way according to his karma, and therefore you have to first of all find out where you are. Are you *sattwic*, *rajasic* or *tamasic*? According to your temperament and according to the evolution you have undergone through millions and millions of years to this day, you have to pick up a *sadhana* or special spiritual practice for yourself.

Conserving the fuel

Now, having realized your temperament, the next thing is the vehicle. The body is the vehicle, the whole body, and prana is the fuel. If you don't have prana shakti, pranic energy, you won't be able to go high in meditation. At a certain point in meditation, you will drop back, you will be stranded on the highway.

In order to accumulate and conserve more prana, you must have a certain mental discipline to conserve mental energy. The more you think, the more you expend your prana shakti. Thinking, worrying, anxiety, all these need fuel and prana is the fuel. Without prana shakti you cannot think, imagine, move, speak or understand.

Therefore, every person who wants to realize the greater and deeper states of meditation must find a way for himself to amplify, conserve and preserve the prana for this inward flight. This prana is not oxygen. It is something similar to bioplasma, it is energy, it is shakti. Maybe someday scientists will be able to see pranic radiation. This prana can be accumulated and awakened by the practices of kriya and kundalini yoga, which come within the scheme of meditation in the system of tantra.

Most people have not really understood tantra. If you don't know tantra, let me introduce you to it, and if you have misunderstood tantra, then let me correct your understanding. The various tantric systems are ways by which you can awaken the dormant, pranic forces that are inherent in you. This prana is responsible for awakening of kundalini. It is also responsible for maintaining unfluctuating awareness of one symbol during meditation.

Prana alone is responsible for maintaining steadiness of mind. In meditation, if your mind is wavering, if your consciousness is fluctuating, if you are not able to rest your mind at one point, it is because you lack prana. Nervous breakdown, nervous depression, vacillation of mind, sluggishness, lethargy, indolence, all these are caused by low voltage of prana. Tantra, yoga, and other sciences suggest many ways to correct this low voltage of prana.

First of all, *prana shakti*, the vital energy, which is the fuel for higher steps in meditation, should be accumulated and preserved so that it is in excess. For example, in India I travel by my own car. Sometimes in the middle of the night I can't find petrol stations, so I keep extra petrol in two or three drums, and my journey can go on unobstructed.

In the same way, all of you must have these extra drums of prana within you, so that when your consciousness is soaring higher and higher, you can maintain it. Otherwise, when the mind starts wavering and the visions start floating, suddenly you will drop and come back to the lower, gross existence.

Disciplining the driver

We have talked about the fuel, now let's talk about the driver. The mind is the driver. He can drive you straight, or he can drive you right off the road if he's been on the bottle. This mind is the power; it is the instrument. Therefore, in yoga the first step is to train the mind.

In Munger, Swami Akhandananda once wanted to drive the car, but I said, "No. You may know how, but you are not a disciplined driver." Now, when he drives in Sydney, I accept it. The mind has to be disciplined just as the body has to be disciplined, a driver or the secretary of a department or the head of a military force, a major or a brigadier has to be disciplined. Without discipline things cannot progress.

Discipline of the mind begins with mantra. Just as a soldier is brought to the parade ground and is drilled, left, right, about turn, likewise the mind too has to be disciplined with mantra. The exact nature of mantra I will not tell you at this moment, perhaps I will tell you later, but mantra is very powerful. It is a strong force that cures the maladies of the mind. It completely overhauls the entire structure of the mind. A mantra must be used by one who wants to go high, one who wants to go deep.

Stick to one mantra

Here I must tell you another thing. I find many people keep on changing the mantra, and then come to me for yet another.

I say, “No! One mantra forever!” The mantra is not your wife whom you can divorce at any time. The mantra is a part of your soul, a part of your mind, a part of your spirit. How can you renounce one mantra and accept another?

Analyzing it psychologically, a mantra which becomes a part of your consciousness will always come into conflict with another mantra in deeper states of meditation. Therefore, once you have a mantra, whether it is *Om*, *Soham*, *Hrim* or *Klim*, whether it is from me or any guru, it is all the same. This mantra should be used well by you. Never try to get a better mantra. Although you might get better husbands, mantras are all the same, and it is no use changing.

To be frank, when people come to seek mantra from me, my first question is always, “Have you ever had a mantra before?” If they say, “Yes”, I say, “Okay, your mantra is the same, but now let it be from me.” I don’t want to change anyone’s mantra, whether it is Allah, Buddha, Jesus, Dam, Ram, Govinda, Klim, Rim, Aim or Srim. I think any mantra can lead you in the right direction, provided you have faith in it. If you want to change your old mantra, then you are going to change the new one also, because it has become a habit to change. So stick to one mantra.

Exploding the mind

Now, how do you use the mantra? There is method called *japa*, in which you repeat the mantra with the mind and breath. The rotation of the mala and the repetition of the mantra with the breath minimize the mental waverings and tranquillize the mind. It creates explosions in the subconscious, and brings the dormant and suppressed karmas to the surface.

Most of you must have this difficulty. The whole day you are at work, your mind is okay, but the moment you take up your mala you find all sorts of ghosts and things hovering over your mind, so you are discouraged. But this is something which must happen; it is necessary. You have to explode the karmas. The impurities must come out, so that you can be free of them. The dormant and suppressed emotions, desires,

karmas and inhibitions buried deep in your subconscious mind, which you are escaping from during the daytime, must come out during the repetition of mantra.

When you are practising your mantra by any method, if an explosion takes place and the mind starts fluctuating and vacillating, don't suppress the thoughts, but try to see them clearly. On the one hand, your mantra is going on, either with the mala or with the breath in the spinal cord, or as your guru has taught you. On the other hand, you must be aware of the forces of the mind, of the process of thinking and awareness.

You remember your home, family and friends; your agonies and pains, past, present and future problems, tragedies and comedies. As the mantra goes on, keep on watching them with an attitude of uninvolvedness. You should never try to reject the thought processes. Every thought that is suppressed comes back again and rebounds. Every thought is power; every thought is like a bomb. The more you suppress it, the more it comes out. And the later it comes out, the more terrible it becomes.

Japa and antar mouna

In tantra we have found a method to release these thought processes without unbalancing the mind. The method is to let the thought process and the japa process continue simultaneously. Sometimes the awareness of thinking becomes keen, and at other times the awareness of mantra becomes keen. Sometimes you are very engrossed in your thinking and then you regain awareness of your mantra, *Om, Om, Om*. There is alternate awareness of wavering and concentration, fluctuation and unification, and this must happen. Thoughts other than your mantra must cease spontaneously and never by force.

Secondly, you should never try to be completely free from thoughts during meditation and to be aware only of the japa or the mantra. You should never aim for this; it is impractical and can never happen. Along with your mantra,

along with your spiritual practice or meditation, thoughts will come, fluctuations must take place, memories must return, your mind must wander here and there. That is natural. If it doesn't happen, you can be sure that somewhere a mental blockage has taken place and you must remove it. So, side by side with mantra, you must practise *antar mouna*, the art of witnessing the thought processes.

Later on you must increase the potentiality of the explosions. How do you do it? You practise your mantra with deep ujjayi breathing in the spinal cord, as if the breath were passing through the spinal cord from bottom to top and from top to bottom. The more your awareness passes through the spinal cord, the deeper the explosions become. These explosions do not just manifest as thoughts. They come in the form of visions.

These visions are nothing but symbolized thought consciousness. Do not mistake them for something supreme or divine or even super-psychic. The lights you see, the forms you experience in the deepest states of pratyahara are nothing but the subconscious mind being expressed in symbolic fashion. It shows what you are deep down and that is what must be exhausted. When the mind is tranquilized, when the waverings are brought to a minimum and when you have been able to unify some of the tendencies of your mind, then these visions float across.

Inner symbol

Here we come to the stage of concentration. First it is necessary to fix some symbol for yourself. It may be an inverted triangle, flame or fire, shining star, blue lotus, red lotus, yellow lotus, the cross, Christ, Shiva, your own guru and so on. When the mantra has been able to create a state of visions and all your thoughts are coming out in symbolic form, you must immediately awaken your symbol and with your eyes closed, you must try to visualize it.

Suppose your symbol is a flame of fire. Even as you see the flame of fire outside, in the same manner, with your eyes

closed, you should be able to see this flame of fire within. This experience of the flame should be abiding. It should continue; it should be stabilized. Some people prefer to have this experience in a particular zone like the heart, while others prefer it in *bhrumadhya*, the eyebrow centre. It depends on you.

When you try to concentrate on your symbol, visions float across the mind. What are you going to do with them? It is very difficult. The more you are aware of your symbol, the more the visions fly across and the more beautiful dreams you have, like the beautiful visions of people who have taken LSD or ganja.

The elephant and the teapot

I have had fantastic visions. Once, years ago, maybe twenty or twenty-two years ago, I was in Gangotri, where the river Ganga originates in the Himalayas. I was living there for a period of nine months with one other sadhu. It was snowing and snowing. All day and all night I used to stay inside the room, keeping the fire going and drinking tea. I had a chillum for smoking ganja. You understand ganja, hashish, which you smoke in cigarettes and we take through the little pipe, and *Hare Hare Mahadev*. Mind you, it was necessary for me at that time, but it is not at all necessary for you.

For nine months I was smoking ganja day in and day out as long as I was awake, and afterwards I would sit for meditation. During this period I used to have prolonged visions of tunnels. I would see camels going through the small tunnels and I didn't know how they did it. Once I had a wonderful vision. It was fantastic. You will like it. Please understand that I am talking about a vision, something like a dream, not a reality.

It was in the early morning. My eyes were closed and I found myself walking with a pot, like a teapot or a neti lota, made out of copper. On the way I saw that an elephant was chasing me. Soon he caught up because he took such big steps. Having no other recourse, I had a bright idea and jumped into the pot to hide.

The elephant approached, looking here and there for this disappearing swami. Finally he peered into the pot and found me. Then he became terribly angry and stomped into the pot after me. I was so frightened that I ran out of the pot through the nozzle. The elephant knew where I had gone and he tried to pursue me, but his tail got stuck in the nozzle and it wouldn't come out.

Finally the elephant managed to pull his tail out and he came after me. Having no other means of escape, I climbed up a small tree about five feet high, leaving the angry elephant beneath. However, the elephant would not be deterred and he started climbing the tree after me. This gave me such a terrible fright that I started to urinate. The stream of urine fell to the ground and the elephant was very happy because he had a rope. As the elephant came nearer and nearer, I got even more of a fright and the urination automatically stopped. So the elephant fell down.

You know, this was only a vision, but it was so real that I can still remember it to this day. Even as I was telling it to you, I could actually feel myself entering the pot. This kind of thing happens. These experiences, whether induced by meditation or by some kind of herb or medicine, are actually symbolic manifestations of pranic energy in the mind. They are known in the yoga shastras, or in the philosophy of yoga, as *vikalpas*.

These *vikalpas* are the greatest barriers to spiritual awareness. With a strong and clear mind, and with tactics, you can sort out your thoughts, the wave patterns of the mind, but it is very difficult to sort out these *vikalpas*. What I have told you about is just one of my experiences. I had fantastic visions during which I forgot all about myself, my mantra and the symbol on which I was supposed to focus my mind. Sometimes these visions would continue for hours together.

The whole time during my stay in Gangotri I tried my level best to fix my mind on the symbol, and every time I succeeded I found that I was going so far away. I would often see beautiful rishis and munis with beards over the snow-capped moun-

tains, and gods and goddesses of Hindu mythology. I know that they were all a part of myself, but I couldn't help seeing them. I would not say they were hallucination or imagination. I consider them to be the most powerful expressions of the deeper states of my mind, because fantasy is a faculty of the mind which is dormant in every human being.

Man has been suppressing his fantasies. We have locked our brains with a big master lock and lost the key. We never allow our capacity for fantasy to function because we have been taught that fantasies are bad: "No fantasies! No, no, a hundred times no!" I say that fantasies are not bad, but you must know how to utilize them. Right from the beginning, you should use your faculty of fantasizing, and later on when you are able to direct this faculty at will, then it will help you to overcome the vikalpas, the psychic explosion, the psychic barrier.

The inner guide

Meditation, this inward journey which I have been telling you about, carries you along many paths and through many experiences when the prana shakti is high and when you know the way. If you don't know the way, you need a guide. The outside guide is the guru, but who is the inner guide? If I am your guru, I can guide you as long as you are awake. But when the sun does not shine, when the mind, the senses and the outer consciousness are withdrawn, and the awareness of time, space and object is no more, who is going to be your guide? Who will lead you on? Who will show you the way?

The symbol is your inner guide. Every yoga aspirant, every student of meditation, must have a symbol for himself, and this symbol must be fixed. It should remain the same always. You should not change it as you change your wife or husband every year, or as you change your house every year. It is not part of a contract between yourself and your spiritual life. It has to be permanent.

Until you realize it as a reality, this symbol is your inner guru, remember it. Your outer guru may be myself, himself,

herself, or someone else. It is all the same. But your inner guru is the shining light of your symbol at the time when you are completely and totally dead to the outer life, when you are no more, when name and form are gone, when time and space have been transcended. At that time the light is needed.

It is for this purpose that throughout the ages, the rishis and munis, saints and sages have emphasized the necessity of a symbol. God is formless; we know this. The Almighty has no form and no name, but we still need a guide who will continue to guide us during the period when we have no helper from outside.

During the inward journey there comes a moment when you are either completely lost in *shoonyata*, the void, because you have no guiding light, or you emerge and come up following the light, *Om, Om, Om*. Visions float across and you come back again, *Om, Om, Om*. In every state of awareness, in every realm of your personality, in every dimension of your consciousness, no matter how high you are, no matter how far you are, the *Om* has to be in front of you, shining. This is the secret.

There are two possible destinies: one is the path of light and the other is the path of the void. The path of the void is *shoonyata*, complete and total annihilation of consciousness. The path of light is where there is someone, something, some experience, maybe a light, maybe a person, maybe music. These are the two paths. You must choose and be certain about following one of the two.

Meditation begins

I have spoken about two things, the mantra and the symbol. The whole edifice of meditation, the whole structure of *dhyana* yoga is built on these twin pillars, and they have to be strong. Remember, one mantra, one symbol. Do not fluctuate. Even if you have not succeeded so far, you will succeed ultimately. Never feel that your mantra is not powerful, and don't look for a better one as you look for a better job. You must leave

this business of flirting with mantra, flirting with devata and flirting with spiritual life. Enough of it now! Please don't be hurt if I speak the truth.

Therefore, the guru comes first, your yoga practices come next, then the mantra, followed by the constant, unfluctuating and unbroken awareness of the symbol. What happens when the awareness of this symbol becomes constant? Take, for example, the blue lotus as a symbol. When the awareness of the blue lotus remains constant, unfluctuating and abiding, there is a moment when there is just the blue lotus. You see it as clearly and distinctly as possible. At that point meditation begins.

Although you may say now that you are meditating, actually what you are doing is preparing for meditation. Meditation begins when awareness of outward life is lost, when you are completely one with yourself. This is a state of experience, true experience. This way you can experience your god, you can experience your guru, you can experience many great spiritual souls within you.

Spiritual transmission

Guru and disciple are the two great powers, the two great poles, but the relationship between them is very difficult to understand or define. Society has not been able to define the relationship between guru and disciple. The guru is not God and the disciple is not a devotee. Guru and disciple are two people who are completely in love with each other on a higher plane. Their relationship is total.

The relationship between husband and wife is not total; it is one aspect of totality. The relationship between father and son, mother and daughter, or brother and sister is not total. It is only one aspect; it is incomplete. But the relationship with guru is complete. He is everything to me and I am everything to him. On the worldly plane he is the fulfilment of my life. The moment we transcend the earthly, physical plane, I also become his medium. I become an efficient conductor. I am the conductor of his mental and spiritual energy.

A guru has many disciples, but a guru without such a disciple as I am talking about is like a powerhouse without a transmission line. What is it good for? It has plenty of energy, plenty of power, plenty of electricity, yet the city is in darkness because there is no transmission line. Therefore, every disciple has to become a powerful medium for transmitting the spiritual power. The stronger the disciple, the greater will be the current.

Sometimes it happens that the strong energy of the guru flows through a weak disciple and the fuse burns out. Sometimes, if the fuse is not there, the wire burns out and there is a fire. Such disciples are fused and destroyed that way. I have had many myself. The spiritual energy is so powerful that there is no other way but for the disciple to simply surrender himself, and then he becomes a transmission line. This goes for every disciple. If you cannot be a main transmission line or a substation, at least you can be a pole by which a small line can be carried to a house or community.

Attitude of acceptance

Discipleship is not a joke and at the same time guruship is not a joy. It is very painful to be a guru and it is very hard to be a disciple. You have to accept. The guru has to accept the disciple in totality and the disciple has to accept the guru in totality, but we are not used to total acceptance. A wife is not able to totally accept her husband, nor the husband the wife. Though they may have dedicated themselves, body, mind and soul, still there is not total acceptance.

This is so with everybody. We are used to this state of non-acceptance and therefore it is our attitude to the guru as well. It is so painful when one has dedicated oneself to a person and yet has not accepted him. It is a contradiction, a paradox. It is nothing but one's stupidity to have dedicated oneself to someone, but not to have accepted that person.

I would not say that the relationship between guru and disciple should be holy and sanctified. Rather, it must be totally logical, absolutely scientific, and it must be in tune with

the purpose for which you have made someone your guru or your disciple. I make disciples and I just want to give them the energy, that's all. If they are unable to fulfil their task, I remove the pole and fix another one.

Right from the beginning of creation to this day, since man has been pondering over the spiritual mysteries, he has not been able to understand this deepest, highest, closest, most unique, unified and unlimited relationship between guru and disciple. On the one level the guru and disciple are two, and on another level they are totally one. At the point where you are totally devoted in meditation, you and guru are one. But when you have a task to perform, you are separate from the guru and you carry his line, the stream of his energy, the current of his power.

Everybody here, belonging to me or to any other guru, must remember that you have to be a disciple. You have to be a strong disciple, a powerful disciple. It is no use talking a lot about your guru or praising him a lot. It is no use posting notices about your guru on the wall. Live the relationship in peace and unity.

This particular session is dedicated to the disciples of other gurus and the disciples of this disciple; to those who are treading the path, who want to go in, who want to go far, very far away, beyond where the light and the darkness can penetrate, where sound cannot be heard and touch cannot be felt. We call it transcendental. To those who want to have this particular experience, this speech and this session have been dedicated.

I sincerely pray that all of you will reach the highest purpose in life, which is meditation, *dhyana*. Man is not born for the external life which he is leading. The purpose of life is to enter into the state of meditation.

10

Kriya Yoga, Kundalini Yoga and Tantra

*20th International Yoga Convention, Sydney Showground, Australia,
20 October 1976.*

For many years you have been hearing about kriya yoga. You have heard and also experienced that there are many yogic and tantric practices which you can do without having to fight with your mind in concentration and meditation. When you try hard to make the mind concentrate against its current, there arises a conflict and a split in the mind. The mind which is wavering is the same mind which is trying to unify itself. The mind has double tendencies and this causes the split. Both tendencies of the mind are very strong. The sensual mind, the one that is given to fluctuations, is just as strong as the other tendency of the mind which wants to achieve unification. Therefore, a split is imminent in the mind.

Make friends with the mind

It is in this context that tantra developed a system in which you don't have to worry about the fluctuating tendencies of the mind. You just go on with your practices and you find that through certain yogic kriyas, the mind has become quieter and has exhausted all its potentialities for fluctuation. This method is known as kriya yoga. The basis of kriya yoga is tantra, and I'm sure that the people in this country are not wholly new to the word tantra.

In the tantric system it is believed that the mind is not something you should start a war against. Some religions in the world teach as a first principle that you should fight with the mind. Tantra teaches just the opposite. It says don't start a war with the mind because the mind is powerful; the mind is full of potentialities. If you do start a war with your mind, ultimately you are going to regress in the process of spiritual evolution. Therefore, the tantric philosophy is to let the mind be what it is and where it is. Do not interfere. Rather, follow the mind for some time. Get to know the whole mind.

You are presently trying to control the mind without knowing its mysteries, its potentialities, its idiosyncrasies. Do you know who you are controlling? Have you any idea of the mind, which you are trying to control in yoga? You are only controlling your thought, and thought is not the mind, though you understand it that way. In meditation, any meditation taught by any guru, when you are trying to control your mind, you are actually controlling your thought, and thought is not the mind.

What you know about the mind is nothing. What I know about the mind or what I can say is nothing. Just as most of an iceberg is below the waterline and only a little is above, so we talk only about the thoughts, about emotion, passion, greed and sensation. But they are nothing so far as the homogeneity and infinity of the mind are concerned. The mind is infinite and yoga aspirants must behave very cautiously with this infinite mind. In tantra we are advised to be friendly with the mind, follow the mind for some time; that is the advice.

The practices of kriya yoga

In kriya yoga there are the practices of pranayama, mudras, bandhas and so on. I have written plenty of detailed material specifically on kriya yoga and those of you who would like to delve deeply into the subject can do so. Here, however, I am only trying to draw your attention to a practice which does not require you to go in for fisticuffs with the mind. In this

practice you don't even have to close your eyes or maintain steadiness constantly in the lotus or the adept's pose.

There are about seventeen to twenty practices which you should follow in sequence. You don't worry about what your mind is doing or how it is behaving; you just go on practising. By the time you come to the end of the practices, you will find that the mind is comparatively relaxed and equipoised, that its fluctuations have been minimized and you are now in a position to concentrate on the symbol. The inner vision has to become clear, and in order to purify the inner vision, to clear the obstructions, all these practices are prescribed.

Kriya yoga has been attracting people's attention all over the world for centuries. Even in the biblical period and before that, in vedic times, kriya yoga was very popular. One of the practices I can cite here is maha mudra. I do not regard this as a secret practice which can only be given to those who are prepared for it. Everybody can do kriya yoga. Everybody is qualified. After all, what qualifications do you really need for kriya yoga? An imperfect mind, an unbalanced mind, a fluctuating mind, a depressed mind, a mind which is completely broken and torn into pieces is all the qualification you need for kriya yoga. You don't need an emancipated mind, a calm and quiet transcendent mind; you need a mind which has to grow.

In the practice of maha mudra, you first sit in vajrasana, then stretch one of the legs forward and place your hands together on the outstretched knee. Bend the head forward, exhale and concentrate at mooladhara chakra, repeating three times, "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara". Then draw the breath in with ujjayi pranayama right up the frontal passage to bindu and hold the breath there for three seconds. Then reach forward, grasp your toes and do shambhavi mudra, focusing your eyes on the eyebrow centre; do khechari mudra, folding your tongue up against the palate; and moola bandha, contracting the perineum. Rotate your awareness alternately through these three centres of shambhavi, khechari and mool – the eyebrow centre, the place where the tongue touches the

palate, and the perineum, for a maximum of twelve times. Then release the toes and bring your hands back to the knee. Exhale and draw your breath down to mooladhara.

This is maha mudra. Do it four times and then see how your mind is. The mind is composed of various elements and it can be controlled through the nerve reflexes by the practice of kriya yoga, pranayama, mudras and bandhas. Just sitting quietly doing japa with *Om* or *Soham* and trying to push the mind back is not a scientific method. It is the method of a person who has no guru.

Awakening the psychic centres

Now we come to kundalini yoga, which is a very important subject, because it is a part of tantra and also a part of kriya yoga. In kundalini yoga the important thing to remember is that by awakening some of the psychic centres in the body, you can transcend the levels of the mind. For example, although I am not suggesting that you do this, if you take some hashish or LSD, no matter how vacillating your mind is, within a moment it will become unified. In the same way, in the practices of kundalini yoga you have certain centres in the spinal column which you should try to awaken. If one of these centres wakes up, then the whole mood changes, the mind starts expanding, or you might say disintegrating and you no longer feel your pangs and difficulties because you are one with yourself.

The first of these centres is mooladhara chakra. In the masculine body, it is located between the urinary and excretory organs, above the perineum and below the coccyx. It is a nerve structure, or you could call it a gland, which is physiologically existent but its potentialities are dormant. In the feminine body, it is located just inside and behind the cervix. In order to awaken this centre, there are certain methods of mudras and bandhas, such as vajroli mudra, maha mudra which I just taught you, and moola bandha. I cannot tell you about them all in detail here, so please read about them in my books.

When any psychic centre in the body wakes up, it changes the consciousness of the mind. When you take spirits or wine, they change the state of your consciousness a little, one way or the other. Likewise, the awakening of mooladhara chakra may not be able to alter the state of your consciousness to the supreme degree, but it can definitely alter your consciousness to a point where you can start meditation easily and not have troubles with the mind.

From mooladhara upwards, you have many other psychic centres. Please study them thoroughly. One of the most important is anahata chakra, which some people prefer to call the heart centre. Its location is near the sternum in the spinal cord. The awakening of anahata chakra alters the normal state of consciousness. You feel highly different. What is said about love, unity and light, you can actually feel at that moment. In our present state of consciousness we don't know what love, unity and light really means. But when this normal state of consciousness is altered and the higher, deeper or expanded state of consciousness is achieved, then love, light and unity become a matter of experience.

Another important centre called ajna chakra is located at the top of the spinal column. Ajna is the symbol of the International Yoga Fellowship Movement. When ajna is awakened, the psychic powers begin to flow. You are at one with the deeper realms of the universe. The universe is not only matter; it is also force. In this universe you have force fields, like electro-magnetic fields and thermo-nuclear fields. These are material fields, and you know many of them. The universe is not only that which you can see with the naked eye.

In this universe there are subtle vibrations, but we are not able to plug ourselves into these higher messages or higher realities. With the awakening of ajna chakra, the mind expands, the consciousness changes, the voltage is increased, everything becomes different. Once you are plugged into the universe, you are connected with the great cosmos. At present you are far, far away from the vision of the cosmos because you haven't got that consciousness. So, with the awakening

of ajna by any method, the vision of the cosmos takes place. This is just an example of how kundalini yoga can help you to attain transcendence over the mind.

The spiritual key

Please note well how careful I have been in expressing my sentiments about the mind. I am one of the greatest friends of the mind. My mind is always my friend and I have never fought with it. It has been turbulent at times, but I haven't minded, because after all, he is me and I am he. Speaking for myself and hoping that you too will think the same way, I must say that I have never felt guilty or ashamed about the behaviour of my mind. It has been thinking hopeless things for years together, but still I know that I am he and he is me. How can I abuse my mind? How can I be scandalized by it? How can I criticize it? I thereby criticize myself.

I always believe that we must transcend the mind rather than kill it. I sometimes even believe that we have to jump over the mind rather than transform it. In many of my books, I have spoken about transformation of the mind, but now I feel that rather than use the word transform, a better expression would be transcend the mind. How can you transform the mind? Mind is mind. The nature of mind is to jump, to think, to feel, to act, to react. The mind is always dynamic. When you soar high in an aeroplane, the big skyscrapers below look like matchboxes. You don't have to pull the skyscrapers down to make them small. You just have to go up 36,000 feet in a jumbo jet and see them as matchboxes, if you see them at all. This is transcendence.

Likewise, in spiritual life, in yoga, you all have to find a method for yourselves which doesn't require you to come to blows with your mind. You need a method by which you don't have to kill the mind, but by which you will be able to transcend the mind. I can assure you that in all the tantric texts I have read, I have never come across one sentence anywhere in which you are asked to control the mind or to kill the mind.

The picture presented to us of kundalini yoga seems to be very frightening at times. Many people have vague ideas about it. They think that if kundalini wakes up, God only knows what will happen. You are so afraid of the effects of kundalini, but have you ever thought about what is going to happen to you if you drink too much? You see, man has always talked about the negative aspects of spiritual life because he wants to stick to the lower plane, so sometimes the picture seems to be very discouraging. There are many books which warn aspirants that kundalini yoga is dangerous. They would never say that cortisone is dangerous, that smoking or drinking alcohol is dangerous. Everything else is alright, but kundalini yoga is dangerous!

This kundalini yoga is the only means by which you can expand your consciousness, by which you can control the hormones and the reflexes of the nervous system. The practices of kundalini yoga, the mudras and bandhas, have a direct bearing on the endocrinal functions and nervous balance and imbalance. Where do emotions arise? Where do they come from? Why do you feel them? Once you are able to get to the right centre, you are going to transcend all of these problems. It can be done, but you must have the key. There is a particular centre and you have to tackle it and regulate it.

Changing the consciousness

Attachment and detachment, nervous balance, nervous imbalance, nervous breakdown, everything is subject to the state of human consciousness. The moment you change your consciousness, everything is gone. All of these things are experiences, they are not realities. Nervous breakdown, love, attachment, desire, sympathy, hatred, jealousy, all these will remain with you, no matter how many doctors and psychiatrists you visit, until you have transcended that state of consciousness.

I am here and you are here. So I must see you; I can't help it. If I don't want to see you, the best thing for me to do is

to leave this hall. Thus, in kundalini yoga and in kriya yoga we emphasize very much that this state of consciousness, personal consciousness, must be altered. This state of consciousness can be altered to the ultimate degree when it becomes aware of itself. That is called nirvana, samadhi, kaivalya or self-realization. There are various names for it. That is the highest state.

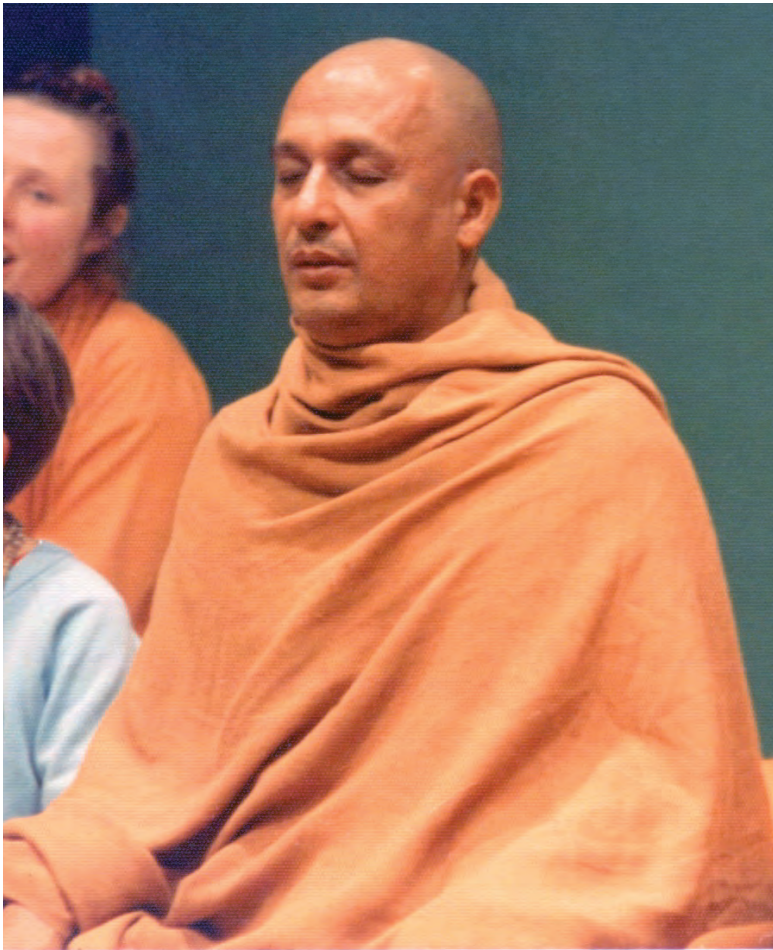
This consciousness can be altered temporarily. For instance, if you are unhappy, open a bottle, drink a little bit, and you will be alright for a while. But the next morning – again depression, the same thing. You are only momentarily influencing the material edge of consciousness and that does not help. Neither hashish, nor LSD, nor any other drug can permanently change the structure of your consciousness.

This change of consciousness can be effected very slowly by prayer, japa and other such practices, but that is a very gradual path. It is like going to India by walking first to Darwin, then taking a raft over to Indonesia, and so on. The practice of kundalini yoga and kriya yoga is like taking a jumbo jet from Sydney to Calcutta and being there the next morning.

This is the path, and our generation today, particularly the Australians, is ready for it. We have had enough of life, we have fed our senses, we have fed our emotions too much. We are overfed! So, a generation, a civilization or a culture which is overfed with sensualities is qualified for kriya yoga and tantra, but a generation or civilization which is underfed or unfed in the sensual life is not fit for kriya yoga, kundalini yoga or tantra.

In addition to what I said yesterday about meditation, I am adding another point today. If you want to reach the highest stages of meditation, please fix the mind up first. It will not allow you to pass beyond it, it is a very big barrier. No matter what you do, whether you practise the bhastrika of Rajneesh, the transcendental meditation of Maharishi, the ajapa japa of Satyananda, or any method of any Swamiji, the barrier will still be there, and no one can break through it.

This is my experience, and this is the experience of all those who have been treading this path for decades and decades. If I am wrong, please tell me. First you have to fix the mind, and I think the only way to do it is through kriya yoga, kundalini yoga and tantra. Although these three are named differently, they are actually one and the same; they are not separate.



11

Awakening the Spiritual Man

*20th International Yoga Convention, Sydney Showground, Australia,
12 October 1976.*

During this convention I have been speaking on prana shakti and kundalini yoga. I have read many books written by eminent authors on this most transcendental and yet immediately useful topic. I don't necessarily agree with everything they write, but beyond a certain stage in spiritual life, it seems that everyone has the same experiences. At the beginning of the practices which lead to fulfilment and enlightenment in yoga, there may be differences of experience, but after a while all of us join a common track and have the same experience. Therefore, my experience is not strictly just personal experience.

Awareness in action

I have been an aspirant and a practitioner of yoga throughout my life. Even to this day, I do not miss even one moment in indolence. I do not wish to miss even one breath in carelessness. When I am given to the expansion of awareness, when I have pledged myself to grow out of this animal in man, and when I have set myself to express the greatest, the noblest, the purest, the brightest and most illumined aspects of spiritual life, then I must dedicate myself to this awareness all throughout my life.

There has hardly been a moment in my life when I have not been living in a different world. Please do not misunderstand me and think that I meditate for twenty-four hours a day – I do and I do not. I have my own commitments. I have my own responsibilities. I have hundreds of centres all over the world. I have hundreds of sannyasins and sannyasinis, most of whom are not in their sixties but in their twenties. You can imagine that I must have some difficulty in my conscious mind and also in my subconscious mind.

On the administrative side, I have to sign not less than two hundred balance sheets every year. From three o'clock in the morning until nine o'clock at night I have to sign letters with my right hand, and with the left hand I am reading various publications. At the same time, I have to dictate to my secretary from Melbourne. In my bathroom I have a telecom, and from there I dictate letters. I have three telecoms for the three secretaries, so I can dictate letters from my room to theirs, such is the rush of work.

There are so many publications to print that I need to have the most modern printing press and an automatic, computerized composing machine, managed by one of your Australian swamis. Apart from this, I have to take care of enormous financial responsibilities, which run not to thousands but to lakhs of rupees. All my institutions run on a total budget of millions of dollars.

Still, yoga can be maintained, higher awareness can be stabilized and one can live above matter while having to deal with matter. That is what is taught by the *Bhagavad Gita* and other spiritual literature. We have been making a mistake. We want to live either the so-called spiritual life or the so-called sensual life. May I tell you that both of these lives can be lived together and there is a secret to doing this. The secret is kundalini.

Kundalini and spiritual awareness

As I told you the other night, there is no other way you can transcend the barriers, no matter what practice you follow,

whether it is the method of Swami Satyananda, Swami Sivananda, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, or Rajneesh. Oh, I can tell you the names of many great men, but none of their practices can make you transcend the boundary wall.

There is a boundary wall, an impenetrable wall of consciousness, a barrier of awareness, and beyond that there is no right of entry without kundalini yoga. You go and come back, go and come back. You see the flame of a candle, the blue lotus, the cross; you see Jesus, Rama, Krishna, Guru, and you come back. You cannot transcend that way.

What you have experienced is the deepest state of relaxation, and beyond that the spiritual experience begins. When the symbol, when the form of the subject of your meditation becomes vividly clear in your mind, when you are not aware of time and space, that is the final stage of relaxation and yoga nidra. It is only after that, that the spiritual journey really begins.

It is in this context that I have always been telling people not to fear kundalini. She is the mother aspect, the Mary of Christians, the Durga of Hindus, the aspect of energy, the aspect of shakti. Just as a scientist explodes the energy out of matter, likewise a yogi withdraws the energy out of matter. This kundalini is at once physiological, mental and transcendental. People have different opinions about this primal power which man has preserved within himself right from the dawn of creation.

For centuries and centuries, for millions of years, man has been travelling in darkness. He has made tools, he has built houses and palaces, he has created armies, he has developed languages, but still he has been living through the dark ages. Unless the alpha rhythm becomes universal and common, natural, spontaneous and ever present in the human being, he is human in form only, but not in reality.

Much of us still lives in the animal kingdom. We move by instinct, we think by instinct, we understand by instinct and that is how we pass our whole life, through a tunnel which is totally dark. We are moving but we don't see ourselves; we

don't know which way we are going. We are going ahead, but we don't know we are going ahead. That is the dark tunnel of human evolution through which all of us have been passing until now.

The moment that the energy is exploded and the awareness comes forth, you know that you are, and that is when you begin your spiritual journey, that is when you begin to feel like a human being. I know that I am. Animals procreate and we do too, but they don't know that they are procreating and we know that we are. They indulge in sex and we do too, but they don't know and we do. This awareness is a special privilege of human existence. It is jnanam, not jnana yoga, but jnanam.

Jnanam is spiritual awareness that has developed in man, making him aware of time, space and objects and their relationships. Maybe there is a dog who is listening to me, but he does not know that he is listening. You know that I am speaking, you know that you are listening, you are aware, and that is the beginning of spiritual awareness. With that you become man, and this particular awareness by which you know that you are has to be expanded.

Purging the mind

Often the outward signs of this process of becoming aware are mistaken for symptoms of schizophrenia by our medical professors, teachers and scientists. If it is schizophrenia, then every man will become schizophrenic before he evolves into another plane of higher existence. Matter has to be split, only then can the energy explode, not in any other way. Matter cannot remain the same if energy is to come out. The mind has to be blown, broken and disintegrated. The samskaras must be broken. The emotions and the various aspects of the mind have to be separated.

You have to see all these things in your practice of antar mouna, and if you don't want to see them, then the natural course of evolution will make you see them. That is why I have always and everywhere been telling people that in the

field of concentration of the mind, the more the vacillation, the better it is for your spiritual evolverment. The more the karmas and the thoughts come to the surface, the better it is for your spiritual illumination. Let them come. If they don't, if concentration begins at once, there is something wrong.

The soul has to pass out all the karmas. You are Christians, do you know what purgatory is? The mind has to purge out its previous knowledge, its previous experience. Even if you don't believe in the previous birth, at least believe in this birth. During the years of your life, how many experiences have you had? How many things have you perceived? Where are they now, and where do they come from? Those *karmas*, those *samskaras*, those seeds, those latent impressions of this life or past lives, have to be experienced, have to be thrown out, have to be purged.

Those who follow the path of yoga should remember that kundalini yoga is one of the most powerful methods of purging these impressions. It works like dynamite, like a powerful explosive. You put it underneath and pow! It is not easy to achieve enlightenment, and it is no good for me to claim that I can give you enlightenment. Enlightenment is the last job that a man has to perform, not the first job. After that, you are fulfilled, you are complete, nothing to gain and nothing to lose – one state of being.

Therefore, in kundalini yoga the very practices which are taught in this context start exploding the personality right from the beginning. You may have read about this in books, but let me repeat it again. When the kundalini awakens in mooladhara chakra, heat is generated, the emotions and passions are generated, and everything seems to be exploding and going around in circles. But the truth is that there are disturbances when consciousness awakens in any field of life.

To give an example, when a beloved husband has just left his wife, how does she feel? Just one incident in life triggers a whole emotional explosion. In the same manner, with the awakening of mooladhara chakra, all the lower karmas are

triggered, pow, pow, pow, pow! Everything comes out and you must only have patience. You must remember these words I am speaking now. Just be patient and quietly watch what is happening – the lights, the explosions, the emotions and the passions; everything is coming up.

Living on a higher plane

This shakti is the awakening of spiritual man. This generation, the one that is coming up now, has a duty to fulfil. I know that not just hundreds but thousands of boys and girls, men and women, all over the world, are engrossed in their efforts, right or wrong, to awaken the kundalini. Some use drugs, some use mantra, others use the raja yoga methods, yet others use penance and austerities, and a few use the help of a guru.

You are not the only travellers on this spiritual path. There are millions and millions. People all over the world have been thinking of just one thing, how to awaken that power by which man can live in a different realm, but still keep operating on this earthly plane. You can live on this earth with lower consciousness, and you can live here with the highest consciousness. Which would you prefer?

When you live here with the lower consciousness, you eat chocolate and all sorts of things. And when you live on a higher plane, are you still going to eat chocolates? Of course you will. But on the lower plane everything you experience carries a reaction and it leaves impressions on your mind. That is karma, the continuity of the existence of karma. When you live on a higher plane of consciousness, you live life and you get the maximum from it because life does not react. It does not leave a chain of vicious actions and reactions, which cause the continuation of this horrible existence.

“My wife died! Oh, my wife died!” What’s wrong? She died three years ago. That’s all finished, but you are still stuck in a state of horrible grief because of karma, because you live on a lower plane of consciousness. You should live on a higher plane, then the enjoyment is greater and the gratification is

infinite. What little you get from life is too much for you. When you live on the lower plane, however much you get from life is too little because you think, "God! Maybe tomorrow I will not have anything at all!" You have insecurity, fear of being looted, fear of losing the grant of nature.

Therefore, when man lives on the higher plane of existence, he is not going to shun this creation. People say, "When everyone becomes a swami, what is going to happen to the world? It will collapse!" I say it will be a world with freedom. After all, what do you mean by a swami? A man who has mastery over his mind is a swami, and he who has no mastery over his mind is not a swami.

When you live on the higher plane of existence you will operate in the beautiful world, and I say beautiful because I believe it to be so, with the beautiful ideals of purity, compassion, and so on, which you now talk about. Before you talk about these things, you must first go up to the higher plane, and then you will see that these idealistic phrases become the reality of experience.

This evening one swami asked me if I loved him. I asked him, "Do you understand what love is?" If you come to me and ask, "Swamiji, do you like or dislike me?" I will say yes or no. But if you ask me whether I love you, I first want to know if you know what love is. When we live on a lower plane our understanding of love is limited. We understand love in relation to our existence and our experience. As we grow and come to live on a higher plane, love takes on a different meaning. We begin to experience love in the absolute sense, without personal limitations.

Please do not mind if I tell you that you don't know what love is. You like people, you like your wife and children, you like your husband and friends, or you may dislike them. You live in a world of love and hatred, *raga* (attachment or liking) and *dwesha* (hatred and repulsion). You live in a world of these two opposites. There may be one person here and there out of millions and millions who has experienced love, who is able to give love, the divine experience.

Prana is fact

The practices of kundalini yoga come to us at a time when they are very much needed for our humanity. This great potential energy in man can be aroused by the methods of yoga, and then the prana shakti can be expressed. Thought can be converted into idea, idea can be converted into will, and will can be converted into creativity. Dissipated energy is thought, concentrated energy is idea, dynamized energy is will, and creative energy is our objective. These objects around us are materialized creative energy. The dissipated energy which we have can be dynamized and materialized just by awakening prana shakti. If you don't awaken prana shakti, it cannot be done.

Last night our doctor showed us slides on Kirlian photography. It is fantastic how plants have prana, the fingers have prana, the nose has prana, this microphone has prana, you have prana, the whole life seems to be an interplay of prana shakti. When travelling by car, by train or by plane, I always think about prana moving this way and that. I spent the whole of last night thinking about your prana vidya class yesterday, and the activity of your prana.

This whole business of prana is fact. Up to now, we have been materialistic. We have seen matter and we have accepted matter. Beyond this, however, we have only postulated; we have never really believed. We would say, "Supposing there is . . ." But now let us say, "Definitely there is prana." The fun of it is that people say the body contains prana, and I say the opposite, that prana contains the body. People say that God is in us; I say no, we are in Him. Are we His containers or is He our container? I remember a story about this.

The picnic

There were four friends who went for a picnic on a weekend. One was a philosopher, one a botanist, one an astrologer and the last a musician. Each wanted to contribute something to the picnic, so they decided that the musician would take

charge of the cooking while the others went to bring the different food items.

The astrologer climbed a coconut tree to pick some coconuts and while he was doing so, a donkey brayed. He took out his book and read that a donkey's bray at a certain time of day is very inauspicious, so he threw away his coconuts.

The botanist went to a greengrocer. He looked at the cucumbers and decided they were too flatulent. He went to the potatoes, but they had too much starch and carbohydrate. The spinach had too much oxalic acid, and the cabbages were all reserved for this convention. The shopkeeper suggested onions, but the botanist said, "No. If it is union it is alright, but if it is onion it is all wrong, and we don't want it."

The philosopher went to fetch some oil for frying. He was bringing it back in a little bottle when suddenly there came to his mind the question of whether God is the basis of creation, or creation is the basis for God; whether Brahman, the Supreme Being, is the basis for the universe, or the universe is the basis for Brahman. Who contains whom? Then he began to question whether the bottle contained the oil, or the oil contained the bottle. He remembered that in logic they say that if there is any difference of opinion on a subject, it should be settled by practical experience. So he decided to drop the bottle on the ground and see. It broke into many pieces and all the oil was spilt.

Meanwhile, our musical brother was cooking the rice. When the rice started boiling, the bubbling sound of the water made a nice rhythm, so he started beating on the pot in time to it. However, the rice pot didn't keep to his timing, so he took a hammer to it, as drummers do when they are adjusting their drums. Of course, he knocked the pot over and all the rice was lost.

Now, when the others came back, they all sat down feeling tired and hungry. These four intellectuals didn't have much to show for their picnic. And so it is in sadhana, that due to our limited ideas and intellectual concepts, we totally miss

the point of the practices and consequently we have little, if any practical benefit to show for our effort.

Prana shakti is the basis of yoga, the basis of kundalini, the basis of creation, the basis of all human activity, the basis of all animate and inanimate existence. Just because the scientists of our time are late in discovering prana shakti, why should you be late also? This prana shakti is going to give you extra energy in your daily life so that you can overcome depression and sorrow. When you are lacking prana shakti, you are depressed, you are tired, you can't remember, you feel shy, you are schizophrenic, and so forth.

Increase your potentiality

We are coming to the conclusion of this convention. This time I came here with a special theme. We should now start to practise yoga continually and systematically – hatha yoga, raja yoga, asanas, pranayama, mudras, bandhas and kriyas. Gradually, not in one year but in a few years, you will increase the scope of manifestation of this wonderful, incredible power of which you had a demonstration last night.

What I have been speaking about during this convention is not a philosophical utopia, but a scientific matter. The people who are involved in yoga and meditation, in Zen Buddhism, or in any system, no matter where they are, must now take up this topic and go ahead with their own experiments in their own lives.

You have captured me with your beautiful kirtans, and more than that by your rhythms, and more than that by your creative dancing. I remember Chaitanya, the great kirtanist of the middle ages in India, who was born in Bengal. When he sang *Sri Krishna Chaitanya*, *Prabhu Nityananda*, *Hare Rama*, *Hare Krishna*, *Sri Radhe Govinda*, people used to follow him for miles and miles just to join him in kirtan.

This is how you evolve. This is the rhythm. This is the creativity. This is how you relax. This is how you increase your potentiality. Maybe if your brains were measured at this moment, it would be found that you have high alpha

wave vibrations. What more do you need than this? We are passing through alpha, beta, delta, theta, and maybe even some other 'pha'.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How does mantra affect the mind? Does it induce concentration?

Mantra influences the subconscious mind and explodes the deeper recesses of karma, thereby bringing the symbols of your deeper consciousness up to the surface. It purifies the mental area, making you free from the psychic diversions in the higher stages of meditation. That is its importance. Mantra induces concentration, of course, but its most important role is to purify the whole area of consciousness. When you meditate, you are interrupted by thoughts and later by psychic visions. These interruptions can be eliminated by a continuous process of japa and mantra. The more you practise mantra, the more you assure yourself of absolute and uninterrupted meditation.

Please tell us something about prana and prana vidya?

Prana is all the energy that maintains the whole physical body. Prana can be dissipated through selfish thoughts and activities, or it can be brought to one particular centre, perhaps ajna chakra or mooladhara chakra. Prana has the power of regeneration, therefore, it can be taken to any part of the body which is suffering, for healing purposes. It rejuvenates the decaying limbs and organs, and restores lost health.

Prana is in the body, and thus it can be distributed equally throughout all parts of the body, or it can be withdrawn to one part of the body. When aroused through yoga, this prana radiates itself from the body. To the naked eye it is not visible. However, the most sensitive photographic system, called Kirlian photography, enables us to photograph the pranic radiations in each and every animate and inanimate object, from human beings to leaves.

Prana is an inherent force in our life, and kundalini yoga is the secret of awakening the super prana shakti. Just as for electricity, you have voltages of 110, 220, 440, and if you go on adding, finally this ordinary electricity reaches a very high voltage when it can be converted into powerful laser waves. Similarly, prana can be amplified, modified and transformed to any degree.

Of course, it is difficult for a normal human being to increase his prana from an ordinary voltage to such a voltage where the degeneration taking place in a particular part of the body can be checked. This is the science of prana vidya.

Prana means cosmic or vital energy which is inherent in the evolution of human life. *Vidya* means knowledge. Just as you practise ajapa japa, yoga nidra or antar mouna, there is also a practical technique of prana vidya. By practising for oneself, every individual can awaken this prana and conduct it with a slightly higher voltage to a particular part of the body. The theory and techniques of prana vidya are ancient, but I have revised them and made them practical for the people of today. For this purpose I have published the book *Prana Vidya*, which is available at our ashrams.

What is the cause of dreams? Will I derive any benefit from writing them down?

Dreams are symbols. They are stages of experience and also symbols of premonition. Therefore, no one should reject or undervalue their dreams. You must record your dreams and after recording them for some years, it will be possible to make a complete, thorough and true interpretation of them. Dreams are the language of condensed thinking, deeper thinking. Dreaming is a deeper state of thought, and no dream is futile or meaningless, but the language of dreams requires thorough study by the dreamer. Continue to write down your dreams. Every three or four months read over your dairy and try to relate the dreams to the happenings in your life, and you will find the language.

What is the significance of astral travelling? Does the ability to astral travel consciously mark a stage in a person's spiritual progression?

This is a very big question. Astral travelling is the travelling of personal consciousness, of your personal mind, which is heightened. When you become conscious, you throw it out into space. That is called astral travelling.

Astral travelling has nothing particularly to do with a person's spiritual progress. It is only one of the performances of the mind, of a strong and qualified mind. With regard to spiritual progress, astral projection is totally irrelevant.

We return to earth many times, sometimes as a man, sometimes as a woman. Is it also true that we must experience all races?

There is something in man, something in matter, that does not die. There is a mortal frame, a mortal aspect to us, and there is also an immortal aspect. So we are an assembly of two elements. The body is the mortal element; we see it, we know it. But other than this body, what happens to the mind, to the consciousness and to the ego?

Much more important, what happens to the infinite desires we have cultivated during our lifetime, which remain unfulfilled at the time of our death? Are they all finished? It is a very bad affair. For our whole life we have been thinking, we have been desiring, we have had ambitions, but they have been unfulfilled at the moment of death.

Are these mental phenomena mortal or immortal? If they are mortal, then the issue is finished and there is no point talking about it. But if the infinite desires and ambitions, love and attachments, and so on are immortal, where do they go? What happens to them?

The third aspect is the consciousness, the soul, the spirit. Is this mortal or immortal? If you say it is mortal, I want concrete proof. I know that the body is mortal, I have seen it. But if you say that the spirit is mortal and subject to death and decay, destruction and disintegration, what is the proof?

This is a great subject which every thinking and open-minded person must confront. Unless you answer this question about the immortal aspect of man, the first question cannot be answered. Once you are sure, once you are definite and convinced about what happens to the immortal in man, whether it stays somewhere eternally static, or keeps moving from one body to another, then you can answer this question.

If the spiritual essence within us emanates from God and we are somehow joined to him through it, then is the personality also from the same source, or is it an independent entity? If so, has it an ultimate end? If not, what is its point?

Part of this question has been answered time and time again by many seers, sages and saints. Part of it remains unanswered. That which remains unanswered I cannot answer, and that which has already been answered is very simple. The greatest power is inherent in every being. We are part and parcel of it. However, *maya*, the supreme delusion, has veiled it, and due to this veil, we have forgotten our nature, even to this day. Like a crazy man we have forgotten our identity, and we have just been talking about the names of the forms. We have been talking about the body more than the actual self.

Therefore, the Supreme Spirit and this spirit in bondage are not two; essentially both are one. But actually, there are two eternal elements. The two elements which are eternal are known as *purusha* and *prakriti*, consciousness and nature, or let us say for the time being, matter and spirit. Matter is eternal and spirit is also eternal. Spirit is the basis for matter and matter is the basis for spirit. Spirit and matter move through creation in conjunction with each other.

As long as *purusha* and *prakriti*, spirit and matter, function in conjunction with each other, there is creation, there is *maya*, there is delusion and there is nascency. However, when these two are separated from each other in the higher spiritual practices, then the real nature of me and the real nature of the higher being becomes totally identical and inseparable.

Is there a deeper significance in the use of flowers?

Oh, flowers! The most beautiful thing that God has created besides the heart of man! The most beautiful thing is the heart of man, but the next beautiful thing is the flower. In my opinion, therefore, flowers represent the most beautiful, the most delicate and the most pure sentiments of man. So far as the practice of yoga is concerned, flowers have an immediate influence on the chakras and on the mind. They help the mind to go in.

What is bhakti yoga?

Bhakti yoga is the yoga in which your emotions are involved. You want to love and you love. When you love transitory human beings, the love is not amply rewarded and there is a lot of action and reaction. If you love the Divine Being, the Supreme Being, if you love God the Almighty, the love is consumed in totality. It is not subject to reaction. Therefore, bhakti yoga is the transmutation of love from matter to spirit.

You sing His name. You repeat His name. You think of His glories and greatness with your mind and you try to keep Him in your heart and mind all the time, as you do with ordinary things in life. When your mind is given to the attachments of the world, then you feel pain, agony and disappointment. There is always separation. But when you dedicate your mind to God, the Divine Being, then you find total satisfaction and, at the same time, an experience of fulfilment.

In bhakti yoga the most important thing is to be able to love God and if you can do this, you should follow the bhakti path. The intensity of love for God has to be such that the total energy, the total awareness and the total mind are consumed. The moment you become aware of your beloved, all your energies are consumed and you forget your surroundings. That is bhakti yoga, the yoga in which the mind is given to the awareness of the supreme being.

What is the relationship between the great religions and to what extent can their beliefs and practices be reconciled?

All great religions are ways to expand the aim and the path, the goal and the way to the goal. The founders of the religions were great yogis, highly enlightened souls. They had the vision of the Supreme. They saw the light and they gathered disciples around them. They taught the practices to the disciples, and the disciples handed the practices down. This is how the religions grew up. Later every religion established a church, a hierarchy that had much more to do with institutionalism than with the actual spiritual practices.

The religious founders, the great mahatmas, the great rishis and the divine persons we know about were all of the same rank, of the same achievement, and what they realized was the same spiritual being. As for the institutions, like Christianity, Islam, Judaism, etc., there are certain differences, and it must be so on the social plane. But so far as the realization of the founders is concerned, I see no difference.

Sannyasins do not adhere to any particular religious belief. What then is their attitude to devotional practices, and what is the relevance of devotional songs which draw heavily from Hindu mythology?

Sannyasins are dedicated to no religion, but they are not taught that they should shun religion. We are taught as a first lesson to receive all religions. God is one, not two or three or more. His names are different because we have different tongues. People here say God, but in Germany they will say Gott. Here we say Jesus, but in South America they say Hesus. Hesus and Jesus are not two different beings; they are one and the same.

According to the differences in our language, we give different names to the Reality. Therefore, sannyasins must pay respect to every religion, without becoming personally involved in any of them. At the same time, a sannyasin is completely at liberty to follow the rituals of any religion if he

likes. If he wants to go to a Hindu temple, a Christian church or a Jewish synagogue, let him do so because all these are places which have higher vibrations.

Of course, we will not say that he should go to clubs and dances because there the vibrations are not conducive to the evolution of his consciousness. However, if you go to church and attend the Mass, or if you go to a synagogue and read the *Book of Psalms*, or if you go to a temple and attend the Arati, then we feel you are doing something very right, no matter what religion you were born into.

I was born into the Hindu religion, but if I go to a church and attend the Mass, I feel very elated because I am in a vibration which is conducive to the progress and evolution of my consciousness.

Therefore, sannyasins can sing psalms, they can sing kirtans, they can sing all the names of God, and all the mantras in Sanskrit, in Greek, in Latin, in Spanish, or in any other language. Kindly remember, however, that what you are singing about is beyond every name, beyond every sound, beyond speech, beyond the reach of the mind and the senses. It is transcendental.

If one cannot accept the Christian, Hindu or yogic system, or any other practice of institutionalized spirituality, but nevertheless feels the need for the meditative discipline and practice of yoga, is one acceptable as a disciple to a guru, and can one be considered as a yoga aspirant?

In yoga there is no discrimination between Hinduism and Christianity, because yoga itself is not Hindu. You will find out later through your study that yoga is much older than the Vedas, the books from which Hinduism has emerged. So yoga is much more ancient than Hinduism itself. What happened was that this yogic science remained alive in a country where people practised Hinduism.

Just because the technological sciences were discovered by great thinkers who were Christian by birth does not mean that they are Christian sciences. Nor would any non-Christian have

any objection if you asked him to study chemistry, biology, botany or any of the sciences which were perfected by those scientists who were born Christians.

In the same manner, although the practices of yoga were nourished, protected and taught by Hindu thinkers, should they by no means be considered a Hindu science. Just as any Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or Jew accepts other sciences, so you can and you should accept yoga as a science.

Do you feel that the yoga movement is over-stressing Eastern habits, such as shaved heads, chanting, dhotis, Indian names and the use of a strange language, to the exclusion of other more basic yoga principles?

The thing to remember is that people are free. Those who are reluctant to involve themselves in these things are not under any compulsion. However, the world today is not an isolated island, and we in the West or East cannot keep ourselves within the folds of a closed culture. The languages, the habits, the cultures and many other things in this free world have to be taken in with an open mind. You cannot say that you and your forefathers who accepted this culture belong solely to this culture. Perhaps your forefathers came from a land where the culture was different, but they accepted this culture and religion because it was convenient for them, or maybe they were forced to by the circumstances.

If somebody wants to accept a new culture, a new philosophy and a new way of life, then let him. After all, the culture concerning dress, food, habits, language, names and many other things is not a perpetual culture. It has been changing decade by decade. In this modern society it is changing every day. Everything has changed, so we should be open to all the changes. We should be prepared to accept everything. We should not be negative to the cultural inflow of life. There are certainly many, many cultures in the world which are probably more valuable, more durable, more precious and more tangible than the culture which we have in this country today.

So, scientifically speaking, the man of the twentieth country has to be an open man in all respects, including that of religion. We tell everybody in every country, including India, keep yourself open, let the fresh thought come in, let the new philosophy come in. If my garden only contains apples and grapes, I should let it have some other fruit, mangoes perhaps. The garden must be rich. If you want a rich culture, if you want a colourful culture, then you must open yourself, not only to the Occident, but also to the Orient.

After all, the Orient is not just a wastepaper basket and the Occident is not the only beautifully decorated culture. I have been telling people for the last thirty years that the Occidental culture emphasizes the external man and the Oriental culture emphasizes the internal man. Do we want only the external man? I think a balance has to be created. In the Orient, the inner man is there without the external man. In the Occident, it tends to be the other way around. Let us have both persons, the inner man and the external man.



12

Satsang on Departure

Sydney Airport, Sydney, Australia, 14 October 1976.

All over the world there has been a period of darkness, not only in the West but in India also. Political intrigues, wars, the shifting of empires, the killing of people, soldiers rampaging countries, Alexander, Napoleon and so on. For about a thousand to two thousand years there has been a very dark period in the history of mankind, of accessions, conquests, armies, and of kings and monarchs becoming more powerful than ever before.

In ancient times, the kings and monarchs ruled the countries, but they were not the ultimate powers. The ultimate powers were the wise men. You may call them sages, swamis or yogis. They decided the course of many important events concerning society. Somehow it happened that the tradition of wise men underwent a process of decadence. Then these emperors, kings and later on the military generals became autonomous and very powerful.

They wielded their might without wise men, without a controller, so they brought about a society which only fulfilled its own economic needs. All the traditions, all the laws were framed in such a way that they tended to accelerate the motion of materialism, not spirituality. They did patronize religions, but only to have total control over the religious followers. If you patronize me, you are not only patronizing me, but you

are also holding all my disciples under your control. That is why they patronized some of the religions.

They patronized the religions and built temples, mosques and churches. They set up religious organizations, but it was all part of the material aim. They wanted to be more powerful. For instance, in the earliest days of communism in Russia, the government ignored the churches, but they are not doing it now because they have realized that if they ignore the churches, there is going to be an underground movement against them. So now they think that it is better to at least help the churches, even if they do not patronize them. Therefore, in Russia, Poland and Yugoslavia they don't interfere with the churches much any more and they give them a little money for repairs, whitewash and all that to bring them within the fold of their power.

Now, after this great gap of darkness for one or two thousand years, during which period many religions came into existence and to power, the time is coming when people will have to realize the old culture which once existed the world over. This culture held a balance between the material and the spiritual needs of man. The guardians of this culture, whom you may call the Essenes, the saints or the swamis, did not emphasize any one aspect, neither the spirit nor matter. They held a balance between the two.

That time is coming back now. Perhaps we will have to retell many stories from the Bible, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* all over the world. These stories have to be reread and retold to our children. If they are not rediscovered and recast, our next generation is going to be totally agnostic because they will not be able to understand their true meaning. The great scientists of our time as well as the physicists, the neurologists and many others are thinking along these lines, but somebody has to take up the work. Somebody has to ensure that the spiritual life and the traditional stories of the great spiritual cultures which existed in the past are not permitted to die out.

13

Guru and Spiritual Life

Satyananda Ashram, Mangrove Mountain, Australia, 1 July 1977.

This is the first Guru Poornima which I have attended outside India and it is purely because all of you have been powerful enough to drag me across the ocean. When the news broke out in India that I was going to Sydney for Guru Poornima, everybody thought that either it was a mistake in printing, or that perhaps there was a town in India called Sydney.

Where there is devotion, where there is love and where there are people who are dedicated to the spiritual quest, that is a place of pilgrimage, that is a place where a sannyasin can go, even outside of India, to celebrate Guru Poornima. When I came to this beautiful valley, I felt that everything was transcendental, not only the valley, but the way people live here in the ashram, the way they cook food, the way they eat and sleep, the way they serve, with an attitude of total acceptance. That is called transcendental, which we cannot expect and cannot see.

The need for guru

So here we are for Guru Poornima. There are many festivals throughout the year dedicated to different spiritual forces, because man has always felt a sense of incompleteness within himself. Right from the very beginning, when he became conscious, he wanted a mother and he had one. Then he

wanted a friend and he had a friend. Next he wanted a wife and he got that too. After that he wanted children and he got them also.

He went on acquiring these worldly relationships through which he could express various dimensions of his personality: paternal love, maternal love, marital love, friendly love. He went on expressing and projecting his consciousness, but still he found that all these relationships were not enough. So he went in search of God, samadhi, nirvana, emancipation, because he wanted to project himself beyond the frontiers of finiteness. He wanted to expand his soul beyond the boundaries of time and space.

This is the answer to the questions of life. Man is not only trying to conquer time and space, but get out of it. It seems that man's mind can never accept the bondage of time and space, even though he lives with it and may have to go on living with it for centuries. Even in his quest for samadhi or emancipation, man still found that he was incomplete. Then he wanted to have a relationship with a man which was based on time and space, but which was timeless and transcendental. It was exactly at this point that he discovered guru and struck a note of success.

Guru is your relative; he is related to you. There is a junction point in life where both sides meet. One side is called transcendental and the other side is called empirical. One is the dimension of time, space, object and limitation; the other is the dimension of timelessness, and it is transcendental. Guru stands exactly at that point where these two dimensions meet. Therefore, in a guru you can always find the aspects of both creation and reality. He is finite and at the same time he is a replica of the infinite.

The discovery of guru is a very ancient discovery. From that time, different gurus in different periods have emphasized the need for a guru in one's life so that one may have a spiritual support. Today is Guru Poornima. On this day the spiritual powers and grace of not only my guru but all gurus descend to this earthly plane in order to

inspire the spiritually hungry souls and pilgrims towards the spiritual life.

Gurus don't want emancipation, even after they leave their bodies. They want to live even after this mortal body is thrown away and the soul becomes free. The guru has an option; he can become emancipated completely, but he does not care for it. Guru is always aware of his disciples and of the aspirations of his disciples. For the spiritual wellbeing and evolution of his disciples, the guru prefers to remain in an interim space after death, and once every year he comes down with his spiritual vibrations, taking care of his disciples, inspiring them, energizing them and increasing them. This is that day.

Spiritual practice begins with mantra

I know one thing: to a disciple a guru may be the road to transcendental life, but the intimacy, the closeness, the unity and oneness between guru and disciple must be supreme. Unless the guru loses himself in his disciple and disciple in his guru, things will not really happen, and losing oneself is a very difficult practice. We are afraid of losing ourselves. We do not want to lose anything and what we especially do not want to lose is ego.

This ego is a great barrier. As long as this ego stands between myself and my guru, the channels of communication are insulated and the current doesn't flow across. You have to remove the insulation in order to allow the energy to flow this way and that way. But we have been living in a world where we have puffed up this ego for decades, for centuries. Perhaps the one thing we are all taught is to inflate the ego. It has been going on for centuries. Economic inflation is just a very recent affair.

When we have lived with our guru as a household disciple and as a sannyasi disciple, one thing we have found very difficult is the method of procedure. So what do we do? We first accept the guru and thereafter we plunge ourselves into spiritual life and spiritual practice.

Spiritual practice begins with the mantra. Just as when a boy and girl marry, they have a ring as the symbol of marriage (I am speaking of the West), so the relationship between guru and disciple is established with the mantra and a mala; this is the symbol. The mantra is the replica of guru's existence in you; it is a constant reminder. The mala is not merely a religious item; it is a tool for meditation.

Mantra is not merely a word. It is something which has been planted in you by the guru at a certain moment of spiritual aspiration. When you sow seeds, what exactly do you do? First you plough the land, break up the hard soil and then sow the seeds. After you have sown the seeds, then you take care of them. You put proper manure on them and arrange for timely irrigation. The mantra is the seed, the *bija*, and your heart is the field. This field is very hard.

Actually the upper layer of this field is the intellect. If you are able to break this, then the seeds have a chance to grow. If you are not able to break this upper layer and you sow the seeds on top, the birds will come and pick them all up, one by one. Finally the farmer will return to find that nothing has grown out of this hard field of intellect because it cannot absorb the seeds. Therefore, soften the heart, fill it with devotion and then it will be easier for the seed of mantra to grow.

The mantra which is given to the disciple should be repeated every day with the mala and with the feeling of the presence of the guru. Once you develop the image of the guru in yourself, you are developing the image of your spiritual consciousness. At a particular level, the image of the guru and your spiritual consciousness are the same. At the lower level, the guru is different and consciousness seems to be different. At a higher level, however, the guru and your consciousness are not two, they are one. Spiritual life begins with devotion to the guru, with the relationship with the guru.

Overcoming our material nature

The life of man is not for enjoyment. The superior life is not for this inferior purpose. The ordinary man lives with limitations

but with complete access to the pleasures of life. However, this human body, this mind, this heart and soul which we have are not meant to be wasted in the fulfilment of pleasures. This is where the whole problem has cropped up.

The human body is a superior creation of God and this human incarnation has been ordained for us to fulfil the purpose of spiritual experience. No being other than the human being can have access to spiritual experience. Only we can have the experience of God, of atman, of the Supreme. God created this superior frame for the fulfilment of the spiritual purpose. But when we squander away the qualities of this superior birth in lower enjoyments, we bring pain, frustration, heart disease and mental breakdowns upon ourselves.

All the problems man is facing today are caused by the misuse of his incarnation. That is the only reason. We have been misusing this valuable human body. Not all of us need to become swamis, but definitely we must become devotees, *bhaktas*, and day by day increase our spiritual awareness, so that some day we may not be disappointed like some swamis who come to Munger for samadhi and end up with shankhaprakshalana.

It has always been a pleasure for me to be here with you, but I think it is not necessary. There is a part of my personality which is in you, and there is a part of your personality which is in me. I don't miss you and you can also not miss me. But the problem is, we can't see it. I can't see you and you can't see me. In truth, every being is omnipresent, which means that we are not only here but everywhere. This immanent, omnipresent, all-pervading quality of consciousness is universal.

Now, however, we are limited. Even as energy is limited, arrested by matter, in the same way the spiritual consciousness is arrested by *prakriti*, the material nature. We all have to overcome the material nature of life. Unless we transcend our material nature, we can never experience our omnipresence; we cannot be everywhere at the same time. When we hear

about omnipresence, it sounds so simple, but when we try to practise it, we find it very difficult. At every moment of life we are limited, arrested, caught and obstructed by the material nature. In yoga it is called *maya*. The difficulty is to cross *maya*.

Birth of a new consciousness

How can you jump over the mind without the help of the mind? How can you jump over the mind with the mind? It is impossible to understand the logic. Mind is finite, and you want to jump into the infinite with the finite. That is the proposal everywhere. Those who meditate understand the limited mind. But you want to expand into the spiritual experience. Who is experiencing? The limited mind is experiencing. What is the experience? Is the experience just the game of the limited mind?

What happens? You keep on circling and circling the same route, never getting out of it. The thoughts keep going around all the same. You are there all the time, everyday, experiencing, coming down. Some people talk about shaktipat, some talk about visions, but I feel it is something else. There is a moment when the mind has to die. Before the death of the mind, however, a new consciousness has to be born.

The mistake everybody is making is that we are trying to annihilate the mind. No, before the mind is annihilated, a new consciousness has to emerge. It is the birth of the spiritual baby. The whole science of yoga is aimed at the emergence of this spiritual consciousness. The spiritual consciousness evolves side by side with the mind. After some time, when you are able to maintain the spiritual consciousness, then you start withdrawing the mind. You will it out.

Two dimensions of consciousness

The consciousness is twofold. One dimension is mental and the other is spiritual. The mental consciousness you know very well – knowledge of objects, fears, illusions, memories,

sleep, erroneous experience, knowledge; this is the mental personality which we have. With the help of this mental personality we know the world, we manage our household, we meet our friends, we go to work, we attend to all of our daily duties, we do everything.

Without this mind what would happen? You could never do anything. You couldn't run a business, you couldn't earn money, you couldn't manage a household, you couldn't live with a wife or husband. You could do nothing because the mind is the basis for all the activities of life. If you have an efficient mind, you are an efficient person in life. However, if the mind is dull, you are nowhere. Mind is the basis of all karma, of all creativity, of all accomplishments. This is called the mental consciousness, by which we know space and objectivity, by which we experience ourselves in relation to our environment.

There is also another dimension of consciousness, called spiritual consciousness, which is not yet evolved. This spiritual consciousness has to be evolved in everyone. After it has evolved considerably, then the lower mental consciousness should be withdrawn. When the spiritual consciousness comes into full play and takes charge of your life, then your senses work in a wonderful way. You don't become inactive, you don't look crazy. This more capable, more powerful spiritual consciousness has taken over administration, has taken total management, and it is able to guide your faculties and your aspirations in a much better way.

So, in spiritual life let us not talk about the extinction of the mind, let us talk about the evolution of spiritual consciousness. In the development of this spiritual consciousness, guru is instrumental as an efficient cause. There are instances in history where gurus have been able to arouse the spiritual consciousness in man. This spiritual consciousness is the purpose of human life. If you live this life only with the lower mental consciousness, then you are only living on the animal plane, the level of instinct. However, if you have become aware that the purpose of this human

incarnation is the emergence of spiritual consciousness, then you can start working for it.

The spiritual culture

I am sure that the coming years are going to be very important for the whole world. I am not a pessimist or a doomsday prophet. I have not only seen silver linings; I have seen light. Every day, every week, every year, I see that the spiritual consciousness is arising and the silver lining is on the horizon. We are not in the midnight of darkness; we are at the dawn of a new day.

Not only here in this country, but all over the world people are working very hard to find a way to spiritual life. All the young boys and girls, the grownups, the family members may not be able to come to this Guru Poornima, and they may not be able to attend yoga classes, but in the depths of their hearts they are seeking. What they seek is a different dimension of existence. They want to live this life with a different means of cognition. They want to change the whole area of perception, the whole area of experience. Such people are the mediums.

After a few years, the spiritual culture is going to be the culture of the majority. We are not a minority now; we are a majority. Wherever I go, every year, I find things are getting more and more beautiful. Soon we will come to a point where we will have Guru Poornima in every city, every village and every home. On this day, people will rededicate themselves and remember their spiritual purpose, which they may not have completely forgotten but have simply neglected.

You must have Guru Poornima, not only in Sydney, but from Wagga to New Zealand, to Queensland, to the Gold Coast; you have all these nice places here. Every year I'll try my best to be with all of you. Of course, I have broken the tradition, but I think it is now a tradition that we will have Guru Poornima anywhere there are devotees, where there are spiritual souls.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What does it mean to surrender to a guru?

In Sanskrit the word for surrender is *samarpan*, which means 'giving oneself as an offering'. When you go to guru you offer yourself to him, but what do you offer? After all, guru is not a king to whom you offer yourself in the form of a fruit! Surrender to the guru means complete unity and communion with him. When you are aware of guru and remember him from minute to minute, you are surrendering. Every time the thought of guru comes, you give your mind completely to it. That is the meaning of *samarpan*.

When you surrender to guru, you give your limited self away and receive it back again in fullness. Surrender is not giving up your freedom, but receiving your freedom, like a king. It is not a matter of prostrating yourself before the guru and saying, "Guruji, here I am, protect me, take me in." How can he take you in, and how can you go in? It is a hard psychic process, but if you want to make quick progress on the spiritual path, surrender is a must. Once the guru has absolute control over your mind and psyche, he will make you spiritually powerful.

Surrender is a natural urge in man. When the surrender is complete, your thoughts are one with the thoughts of the guru. Then every word that he speaks comes true in your life. This I know from my own experience. If the disciple is disobedient and obstinate with a personality of his own, though this may be a good thing in its own right, the guru's words will not come true for him – this is the psychic law. When the disciple has completely surrendered and his mind is connected with the guru's mind, he is not only guided in conscious moments, but also during meditation.

In certain stages of meditation there is darkness, a deep valley through which the disciple is unable to pass, but the voice of the guru carries him beyond it. If he cannot obey the guru on the conscious plane, he certainly cannot do so on the unconscious plane. When commands from the guru

are received on the unconscious plane, even if the disciple is told to perform the most difficult action, he is able to carry it out if the unconscious mind is obedient to the guru.

The purpose of surrender is to become an efficient instrument of the guru on all levels. If the disciple's surrender is complete, when the guru tells him, "This will happen through you", it happens. The guru can work wonders through the disciple who has totally surrendered.

How does guru's guidance help us?

When the guru's guidance is of a pure nature, the disciple will never fail, unless he leaves the guru due to lack of interest. He may also get discouraged and leave, not understanding the true nature of the guru's help. This sometimes happens if the disciple doesn't feel results quickly enough, or when sickness arises.

The guru watches, instructs and warns his followers in many different ways and on different levels of consciousness. With pure love and constant awareness he is always guiding them. Even if the guru is far away, it does not matter. A mother continues caring for her child even if she is on the other side of the world. In the same way, the guru's guidance is both present and necessary at all times.

How is the guru-disciple relationship formed?

In deciding one's spiritual relationship with guru, one's eternal relationship with the Supreme Being, absolute sincerity and devotion are required. When you enter into a relationship with the guru, it is very important that he should be able to handle you without any difficulty. So the disciple could be compared with a pet dog. Of course, the necessity of the guru in teaching yoga or meditation is always there, but in forming the guru-disciple relationship on a practical level, it is the guru's knowledge, experience and ability to direct the awareness of the disciple that is important.

For that purpose, gurus give different sorts of exercises to check up where the disciple's awareness is responding.

If the disciple does not respond to the guru's instructions, suggestions or inspiration on this ordinary intellectual level, then how can the guru direct him in that higher realm? If the guru is not able to direct his disciple's conscious thinking, how can he direct his dreams? Guru should be able to influence and direct his disciple's mind in any direction – right, left, front, back, up, down into the ditch, onto the mountain, into the river, into the fire, into the water. And disciple says, "Take my life and let it be." That is the concept of the guru-disciple relationship.

How do you reconcile the principle of detachment with the apparent interdependence of the guru and disciple?

Guru and disciple, are they interdependent? No. They are independent. They have to be independent. The disciple does not really depend on the guru nor the guru on the disciple. However, the disciple has a system of withdrawing himself in the image of the guru. After this process is over, the disciple can transcend the guru himself, and that has sometimes happened in the past.

What is the difference between the guru-disciple and husband-wife relationship?

The relationship between guru and disciple is very different from the relationship between husband and wife. The love and attachment, the relationship that is created between guru and disciple, helps the disciple to overcome the barriers created by the personal ego. Guru and disciple have been husband and wife. It sometimes happens, as in the case of Ramakrishna Paramahansa (guru of Swami Vivekananda) and Sarada Devi.

Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi were husband and wife, but this was just a social relationship. After Ramakrishna was enlightened and became a guru, he considered Sarada Devi as his higher being. To him, she became Kali, Durga, the Divine Mother, the Divine Spirit. At such a point, you begin to see your wife in a completely new light.

Although the guru and disciple live on the social plane, the personal evolution of the guru is nevertheless far beyond the social plane. My own opinion is that guru and disciple stand strictly on the spiritual plane, no matter what their relationship is. Even if they live as husband and wife, that is purely on the physical plane, and it is not the purpose for which they live. This, or any kind of social, physical, mental or emotional relationship between guru and disciple, has to be transmuted. It has to be utilized for spiritual illumination, the elimination of karma and tamas, and for subduing the ego.

What are the deeper aspects of the guru-disciple relationship?

Mother and daughter, father and son, brother and sister, husband and wife – these are social relationships through which individuals are bound to each other. By virtue of a relationship you cherish someone or something in your life: a husband cherishes his wife, a mother her child, you cherish money and so many other things. The relationship between guru and disciple, however, is the closest of all relationships, with one great difference – it has no carnality. It is not based on physical or emotional attachments. It is not a blood relationship or one of worldly love. Between guru and disciple there is a spiritual relationship only.

When guru and disciple are connected with each other on the spiritual plane, much of the disciple's karma can be assimilated by the guru. If the guru is highly evolved, he takes the karma of his disciples but he does not suffer; he just throws it away. This is only possible, however, when there is perfect communion between guru and disciple on the spiritual plane, not on the physical or emotional plane.

This means that while sitting for meditation with the eyes closed, you forget the whole world and everything except the guru, who is always there in front of you; that is communion on the spiritual plane. When I close my eyes I see my guru. If this is the depth of the relationship between you and your guru,

then you can get anything from him; nothing is impossible. Maybe you can even become greater than your guru.

There are so many barriers between 'me' and my guru, between 'me' and God, and these barriers are so high, so strong that a disciple can't break them. That is why the guru and disciple behave as two and not as one; there is duality. You have your own personality, limitations, passions, pride and ignorance. You are also not sure of your guru and your relationship with him; maybe he not so highly evolved after all. You understand the purpose and the meaning of the relationship, but still you have so many doubts; you are not convinced about him. So what happens? Even though intellectually you understand everything on a practical level, the union, the communion does not take place.

Where do guru and disciple unite? Not on a physical, emotional or mental plane; they unite in total darkness, when everything is finished; in the innermost chamber where everything is dead. There you do not hear a sound or see any form or vision. You are aware of nothing but the guru, shining like a lofty light. That is how guru and disciple must commune with each other. If I am your guru, it is not necessary for you to say, "He is my guru; he is so fantastic." We are one. Praises are for worldly people, not for us. The guru-disciple relationship is also very secret and absolutely personal. Without a guru, the disciple can go astray; and without a disciple, the guru can also go astray.



14

Kriya Yoga and the Laughing Swamis

Satyananda Ashram, Mangrove Mountain, Australia, 2 July 1977.

Kriya yoga is one of the most effective methods for coming closer to inner awareness. Originally, kriya yoga was a part of tantra. The philosophy of tantra says that everybody has a right to higher unfoldment. Therefore, your personal status in life, whether you are a brahmacharya, a householder or a sannyasin, matters little in the practice of kriya yoga.

The purpose of kriya yoga is twofold. First, the expansion of awareness and second, the liberation of energy. Expansion and liberation are the two important things that take place in kriya yoga. The consciousness of the individual has to be stretched beyond the frontiers of the mind and the senses, and then energy or *shakti* is released from the phantom of matter.

Energy is dormant in every speck of creation. The whole creation, the entire cosmos is shakti manifesting in a gross form. If you can finally reduce everything, every name and form, that which remains at the end is shakti. Every form of existence has to revert back to its original shape. The origin of creation, of name and form, of matter, of time and space, whatever you can think of is shakti.

Shakti is the first matter, but do not mistake shakti as female, or even male. We think of shakti as female because in our grammar it is in the feminine gender. But God is not a man and shakti is not a woman. Man and woman are

variations of name and form. Energy, shakti, is beyond the first matter, beyond name and form. At different stages of manifestation this shakti is known as the universe, mind, consciousness, awareness, senses, perception, cognition, motion, body. These are various forms of shakti.

By the practice of kriya yoga you are releasing the shakti from the fold of matter in exactly the same way as scientists release energy from matter by the processes of fission and fusion. These twofold processes are always integrated in the practices of yoga. While you are concentrating your consciousness on one point, you are creating a process of fusion, but while you are trying to pull yourself away from the distractions of the mind, the samskaras, you are creating a process of fission, of breaking.

The process of breaking and the process of union take place simultaneously in kriya yoga. This ultimately results in the explosion of energy, the experience of the power of shakti. Therefore, kriya yoga, which is an offshoot of tantra, is a practice of the expansion of awareness, finally resulting in the release of shakti.

Every speck of creation is energy, shakti. Matter is shakti. We see this matter in different forms and at different levels of yogic experience. Material experience is convertible into spiritual experience, and spiritual experience is convertible into material experience. That is what happens every day. We have experiences every moment of our lives. We experience forms, taste, sound, touch, hatred, love. What is all this? It is shakti converted and brought down to a level of experience through the body.

There are certain experiences which can be had through the medium of the senses. There are experiences which you can never have through the medium of the senses; they can only be had through the medium of the mind. And there are those experiences of reality which you can only have when you are able to transcend the senses and the mind.

It has been said by the Christian Saint John of the Cross, "By God, I swear I die every night." The same idea

is reiterated in the *Bhagavad Gita*. What is this death, what happens after it and where do we go? I'm talking about the death that takes you into samadhi, into spiritual awareness. What happens after this death? What happens to the consciousness?

When the senses are withdrawn, the sensual experiences stop. There is no more seeing, smelling, hearing, feeling or tactile consciousness. And when the mind stops, the process of thinking ceases. That is death: "By God, I swear I die every night." By the practices of kriya yoga in particular and by the practices of yoga and meditation in general, we trigger off a process of total withdrawal of sensory consciousness and mental consciousness for a moment of time, say ten minutes, five minutes, one minute, a split second – that's long enough. When this death takes place, then the light shines.

After the senses have been withdrawn, the mind has been withdrawn and your individual ego has been withdrawn, the inner awareness becomes effulgent. Your inner awareness becomes clear and it can follow two paths. One is the path of illumination, of inner experience, of total experience. This is the path which is developed by the practice of kriya yoga. However, many aspirants who are able to withdraw their senses and their minds sometimes enter into the path of darkness.

There are two paths: the white and the black, the illuminated and the dark. It is the practice which you do that is responsible for your inner experience. That is why tantra says that the way should be illuminated. When your eyes are closed, when your mind is closed, when there is no external experience taking place whatsoever, then the inner experience must become full, rich, complete and total. You should not enter into a state of rigor mortis or suspension of awareness. This is the most important result of kriya yoga. That is why for centuries and centuries people have been talking a lot about it.

I want to make it very clear that kriya yoga is open to everyone, whether you are a regular householder or an irregular householder. Before taking up the practice, however, you must first become proficient in hatha yoga, that is very important.

The laughing swamis

I would like to end with a story. There were three swamis; we used to call them the laughing swamis. They did nothing but laugh all day and all night. Wherever they went, they laughed and laughed all the time. They laughed through the villages; they laughed with the children.

Finally, the day came when one of the laughing swamis died. Now, the people of the locality wanted to see what the other two swamis would do. After all, when someone dies there must be mourning. But when they hastened to the spot, they found both swamis laughing merrily while preparing the body. Eventually they placed the body of their friend on a stretcher and carried it to the burning grounds to consign it to the flames. Along the way there were no suppressed drums, no church cars. They were laughing and laughing. Everyone brought flowers and laughter.

Finally they placed the body of their friend on the pyre. The Hindus first put logs of wood and, if they can manage, some sandalwood. Beforehand they usually bathe the body in Ganges water. They give it a scented bath and then place it naked on the fire. However, this swami had made a will before he died, which read, "When I die, I should not be given a bath. I should not be placed on the flames naked. Without any ceremony, I must be consigned to the fire, dressed in the clothes I am wearing."

So they had to accept what he had willed. They placed the body on the fire and when it began to burn, suddenly there were loud explosions – putt, putt, putt, putt, as fireworks spat out everywhere. Before he died, this man had thought that even when his body was at the most lamented moment of the fire ceremony, people should not be sorry, they should not shed any tears, they should not say, "Poor fellow, he is gone, we will miss him." So he got a lot of firecrackers and put them everywhere inside his clothes. When he was put on the flames, the crackers started exploding and everyone laughed merrily.

This is a story of a swami who laughed when he was alive and made others laugh when he died. I think Australians are

representative of this. I have been to almost all the countries of the world and I can definitely tell you that nobody can laugh like you do. Those three swamis are dead now, and they must have reincarnated as Australians.

So now it is high time that these laughing swamis, these laughing Australians, these relaxed beings full of honey, full of apples, full of juice must be exported out of Australia to those nations which are psychically emotionally and spiritually underdeveloped, where there is a scarcity of happiness, where the people are starving for it, where they don't know how to laugh.

You know, sometimes I go to Scandinavian countries and there they laugh behind their hands. They hide it and suppress it! They don't want to let anyone know they are laughing. I don't understand a person who can conceal happiness and laughter. Happiness is for all. The same thing applies in many other countries.

Therefore, the time has now come for the happy people, the spiritually minded people, the dedicated people and the comparatively freer people of this country to prepare themselves so that they can go out with strong minds. It is not sufficient for you to export wheat and other edible commodities. The world today is hungry for spiritual knowledge. People all over the world want to practise something for their spiritual progress, but there are not enough people to help them.

The people of this country have really come up and we can consider you as people of a spiritually developed nation, not a spiritually underdeveloped nation. Australia is a spiritually enlightened nation, and so your hearts must now accept this hint which I am giving you. I will tell you more when I come next time.

Keep on moving for the good of the many, for the pleasure of the many, for the guidance of the many, for the elevation of the many, all over the world. Don't care for geographical frontiers, religious frontiers, political and ideological frontiers, just keep moving. No colour bar, no white and no black, no

yellow, no brown, keep moving and have this dream. I think that as the laughing swamis gave laughter to Australia, I give this vision to all of you.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Kriya yoga is a fast and efficient path of yoga. If an aspirant were to practise regularly and diligently, what period of time would be required to reach the goal?

Kriya yoga is intended to accelerate spiritual evolution. If we practise it for one and a half hours every day, it will definitely accelerate the pace of our evolution. However, it is difficult to say how long it will take, because every individual has his own karma according to the life which he led in his past birth. That is also responsible for his present fulfilment.

What is the reason for spiritual names?

You have a body, so you should also have a name according to your astrology, your priest, your birth date, or your parent's liking. The name indicates the physical man. But what will you call another man born within this man? When the child of spiritual awareness is born within you, are you not going to give him a name? A spiritual name is given to the man who is waking up according to deeper and more prominent aspects of his personality. This can be seen by the intuition of a highly evolved being.

Can the obstacles one confronts in spiritual life lead to his downfall?

There is no downfall once you take to the higher spiritual path. There is only a momentary accommodation or compromise with the situations of life, and that is what most of us have to do. These obstacles you talk about, I think they are not actually spiritual difficulties. Saints say that they are stepping stones on the spiritual path, and I say they are necessary experiences.

After all, in order to have progress there must be friction, and when there is friction there must be two opposite forces

pulling each other. Unless there are two forces pulling against each other there can't be friction; unless there is friction there won't be movement; unless there is movement there can't be progress. All these obstacles we talk about are the causes of friction.

Do you know how your car runs? It runs under contradictory principles; two forces are pulling each other and the car is moving forward. If you say, "No, these two forces should not pull against each other," then there will be no movement. The car will sit in the garage. Where there is no friction, there is no movement, no progress.

So if you do not want spiritual difficulties, you will never make any progress. If you don't want to face passions, worries, anxieties and conflicts, you will never progress. It is important to understand that these obstacles form a necessary stepping stone to higher spiritual attainment. You must never ignore or avoid them. Do your practices sincerely and be ready to face whatever experiences come to you.

What is tantra?

Actually, tantra is the aim of yoga. From tantra, yoga has emerged. Tantra and yoga are inseparable. Tantra goes side by side with the yogic practices. What we want in life can be achieved by tantra and also by yoga. *Tantra* embodies two Sanskrit words: *tanoti*, expansion, and *trayati*, liberation.

Tantra awakens the psychic body, the kundalini shakti. It is the system by which you liberate or separate the two aspects of consciousness and matter, *purusha* and *prakriti* or *Shiva* and *Shakti*. Sometimes matter rules over consciousness and sometimes consciousness rules over matter. When consciousness rules over matter, there is spiritual vision. When matter rules over consciousness, there is creation.

These twin energies live and work together in total agreement with each other. As long as matter and consciousness are united, existence continues in a set pattern, but by the practice of tantra you can separate matter from consciousness, *prakriti* from *purusha*, or *Shakti* from *Shiva*. Then the

awakening takes place. What we are aware of within us is a combination of the two. We are aware of matter – the material body, and the mind – the ‘T’, the senses and the objects of perception.

We are aware of all these sections at the same time. By the practice of tantra, the awareness is withdrawn from these sections and centred on one point – ‘T’. That is the separation of prakriti (matter) from purusha (spirit), and that is tantra. How do you practise it? There are many ways. The most important part of tantra is mantra, and next comes kriya. With the help of mantra and kriya yoga you can awaken the dormant potential power known as kundalini shakti. This is the prime purpose, the ultimate reality, in tantra and in human evolution.



15

How to Use a Mantra

Satyananda Ashram, Mangrove Mountain, Australia, 3 July 1978.

This is something regarding the practical side of your daily practice. Most of you who have a mantra will sometimes be confronted with the question of what to do with it and what it really means. A mantra is a collection or an assembly of principles of sound. In the system of tantra, the mantra is considered to be the symbol of higher energy in a potential state, similar to what you have in dynamite. As potential energy is stored in dynamite, in the same way, the great cosmic waves are enshrined in the mantra. *Om* is a mantra and there are many other mantras.

Each and every syllable that every mantra contains is not merely a sound from an alphabet. When you pronounce a mantra, it influences the astral sphere of the universe, just as, to give an example, an atomic blast influences or even burns down the thermo-nuclear atmosphere, even though we don't see it. In the same manner, the mantra influences the deeper, greater, and more astral and subtle spheres of the cosmos, the microcosmos and also the macrocosmos. The microcosmos is that which is me, and the macrocosmos is the whole totality of creation.

The mantra is a means of awakening the great power and shakti in an individual. It is not just the name of God or a deity. A disciple who has a mantra should practise it daily,

twice a day with regularity. The way to practise a mantra is known as *japa yoga*. *Japa yoga* is the science which deals with the practice of mantra. You will learn how to pronounce the mantra at four different levels: audibly, in whispers, mentally and spontaneously. This is a subject by itself which needs experience and practice in order to be understood.

The mantra can be practised with the mala, with the breath, without any concentration on the breath, chanted aloud or written on paper. In all these ways the *mantra shakti*, the power of mantra, can be awakened. When you practise the mantra on the breath, how do you do it? It is a very simple system.

After your practice of asanas and pranayama, sit straight; close your eyes and immobilize your body; no physical movement whatsoever. Concentrate either at the tip of the nose, the mid-eyebrow centre or the lotus centre of your heart. Once you have chosen a centre for yourself, do not change it every now and then, as you change your husbands and wives. Stick to one chakra point or centre.

Now that you have fixed your mind on the point, concentrate and become aware of the breath moving in and out. Awareness of the breath is the way. You breathe all the twenty-four hours, but you don't know that you are breathing. It is very necessary to follow the rhythm of the breath, to be aware of each and every movement of the breath for a period of ten to fifteen minutes, half an hour, one hour, as long as you can manage. "I am breathing in, I am breathing out", should be the form of your awareness.

When you have been able to establish and maintain concentration on the breathing process, then you integrate your mantra. If it is *Soham*, repeat *So* with the ingoing breath and *Ham* with the outgoing breath. If the mantra is *Om*, repeat *Om* with the ingoing breath and *Om* with the outgoing breath. If the mantra is *Ram*, repeat *Ram* with the ingoing breath and *Ram* with the outgoing breath. You have to synchronize the mantra with the breath awareness and go on practising it.

The other way of japa is just by chanting and this can be done in many ways. Supposing your mantra is *Hamso Ham*. You can just repeat it mentally without any movement of your lips and tongue. You can chant *Hamso Ham, Hamso Ham, Hamso Ham*, silently for about ten to fifteen minutes while you are concentrating at the mid-eyebrow centre or one of the other centres.

Every aspirant and disciple must practise the mantra every morning and evening. Mantra leads to meditation. You should not embark upon the practice of meditation by force. Meditation is *dhyana yoga*. Meditation is inner awareness. If you make unusual and undue efforts and force yourself in meditation, it will lead you nowhere. Meditation is the spontaneous culmination of concentration. You don't practise meditation, it comes by itself when the mind is ready. First, practise the mantra. This leads to concentration.

Concentration is practised on a symbol. Everyone has a symbol: a star, a deity or something psychic. From the mantra you go to a symbol, and from the symbol you go to meditation. This is yoga, and everybody, everywhere should remember that spiritual life and the practice of yoga are a must for every human incarnation. The accomplishments of this worldly plane will not give us everlasting satisfaction. The sensual experiences of this life have to be gone through, but they are not the ends; they are the means, and the means can never lead us to the ultimate.

So finally, you may not be able to realize the higher illumination immediately, but you must plod on slowly. Once you become aware of the inner self, you will be convinced and satisfied. Satisfaction and the experience of supreme bliss can never be obtained by the senses and by the mind because these are limited, they are finite. Finite means it can never lead us to the infinite experience. The senses and the mind depend upon objects; they are limited by time and space.

Everyone must have a spiritual program with a combination of hatha yoga postures, pranayama, mantra and

symbol. Make a longer program in the morning, say about half an hour to one hour, and a shorter program at night, say about fifteen minutes. Prepare yourself and become proficient so that you will be able to learn all the secrets of kriya yoga.

Concluding remarks

This Guru Poornima has been an experience for all of us. In India, we gather in thousands just like this. I am very happy to have been here with you all. I hope to see you again when you open another ashram in Queensland.

I shall be leaving tomorrow and I am taking plenty with me from Australia. I'm taking away from your midst Dr Swami Vivekananda. I'll make full use of his personality and knowledge. We have already fixed his programs all over India, in the medical colleges and universities. Medical professionals must understand that the body is not the first and the last. They are not authorities even on the body. They know a lot about medicine, a lot about physiology, but body, mind and soul have to be known in conjunction with each other.

Diseases, their causes and treatment, their diagnosis and aetiology have to be redefined in the present circumstances of civilization and society. Two hundred and fifty years ago, if a man had a headache, it was a headache. If someone had an asthmatic attack, it was just that, an asthmatic attack. But now it is much more than that. It may be due to tension or anything else. It may even be a karma working itself out.

As Swami Vivekananda has been an eminent and successful doctor and psychiatrist, now he will have to redefine what these intelligent scientists should think about human maladies. Not that we do not agree with the medical profession, we do, because it is a great science and it has helped mankind. However, the unhappiness of man, his inner difficulties, his physical problems have gone beyond the hands of the great medical scientists. Here yoga comes into the picture.

A lot of research work has already been done in modern countries on the effects of yoga on such diseases as rheumatism,

asthma, diabetes, hypertension, and many other projects are underway. In Munger, we are coordinating the results of these studies with the help of Swami Shankardevananda (Dr John Merer). After obtaining his degree in medicine, he came to help me.

We are coordinating the results of the medical research all over the world, and we find what a lot of work the scientists have done. They have worked especially on the influence of *dhyana*, meditation, on the brain waves, on the blood pressure, on the heart, on the oxygen levels. All sorts of good things are coming out by which we can understand that the practices of yoga and meditation are not only mystic and religious; they are immediately practical and they influence the entire being from heaven to earth. They influence the body, mind, and spirit.

The research that has been done in the USA, in India and in many other countries will throw more light on the possibilities of yoga therapy in a few years time. There is a big list of diseases which can be easily tackled by the practices of yoga. There may be more than two hundred. On the list is asthma, migraine, blood pressure, insomnia, rheumatism, constipation, diabetes, nervous depression, nervous breakdown, schizophrenia. We have listed one hundred and twenty-nine diseases which can be very easily, safely and perfectly managed with the practices of yoga.

So Swami Vivekananda is following me to India on a mission. India also has many outstanding medical scientists, and he will be working with them on these possibilities. In Bihar, we are working on a project to determine the effects of *yogasanas* on coronary diseases. In Patna Medical College Hospital, more than one thousand cases have been referred to the Head of the Department of Cardiology. Next year the research will be complete and Bihar School of Yoga will bring out a book with reports of the patients, their condition, the practices they were taught and the results.

16

Interview with *Simply Living* Magazine

Satyananda Ashram, Mangrove Mountain, Australia, 3 July 1978.
Interviewers: Romilly Wright and John Stewart

Introduction: Although it is only ten years since the Beatles brought India to the attention of the western world with their devotion to Maharishi, it is a decade that has seen incredible cultural and spiritual exchange between the Indian sages and the youth of the West. At first this influence was largely misunderstood with media coverage of sensational stories about 'strange devotional practices' and the giving up of material possessions. However, attitudes mellowed, and many now see the true contribution these teachers are making to the rebirth of spiritualism.

India has traditionally been the home of these gurus, but many are now establishing centres or ashrams in the West to further their teaching, and travelling extensively to spread inspiration and hope for the future in our troubled society. Swami Satyananda is one of these sages that has taken a particular interest in the West. His ashram in Bihar, India, sometimes has more westerners than Indians residing there, although he will often send them back to the West to resume their life as householders, integrating their new understanding of life into modern society. Others stay to become sannyasins, committing themselves to teach yoga to the world.

Swami Satyananda regards his teaching as modern day orthodox, for both westerners as well as his countrymen, and travels extensively around India, as well as internationally, to further his teaching. He has visited Australia four times since 1968. On his last trip here to celebrate Guru Poornima with his followers at their ashram on Mangrove Mountain, outside Sydney, we visited them there, savoured the gentle, clear vibrations and then sat down to talk to him.

Could you define the word guru?

Guru literally means one who dispels the darkness which is obstructing the passage to the higher consciousness. Dispeller of psychic darkness is the literal meaning of guru. But in worldly parlance, guru means a spiritual teacher; one who teaches the subjects pertaining to spiritual life.

What are the demands of your yoga?

I would say that yoga demands sincere, regular application of knowledge in practice. The practices of yoga should be done with sincerity and regularity, whatever form of yoga you take upon yourself, whether hatha yoga, raja yoga, dhyana yoga. That is the only demand.

Does everybody have a guru either in this life or another?

Everyone has a guru, but some people have become more aware of the guru, others have not become aware. For example, everybody has emotional needs, everybody has natural urges, but some people have been able to fulfil them and others have not. Guru is the inner self in everyone and he is always there, but by becoming more aware through the outer guru, one becomes aware of the inner guru. The real guru is inside.

It is said that one has met one's outer guru in past lives. Did we meet him as a guru in our past life, if so, why were we parted from him?

If an aspirant has had a guru in his past life, but in this life he fails to continue to be a disciple, then early in life he has to

undergo a certain form of experience, without any association with the guru. With that he can also have the experience of the limitations of this life. After he has realized and experienced the limitations of this life, then the love and devotion, and the intimate awareness of the guru grows more and more. Then one finds the same guru again.

It is something like the longing that a child has for his mother. When the child cries and is pining for milk and food, the mother doesn't necessarily come to feed him, not because she doesn't know that he is crying, but she prefers that he wait until the right time when he should be fed her milk. So there is a right time for giving knowledge and a right time for the emergence of the guru in the disciple's life, even if the disciple has had the same guru in his past life.

Why has India been the chosen country for yoga and the home for so many great saints?

The whole world was once a home for yoga and for gurus and saints. However, a few thousand years ago many civilizations came into political conflict with each other and they were completely destroyed in wars. The civilizations were totally ruined and some geographical catastrophes also took place, such as the submerging of the Atlantis civilization.

Now these warring nations, which were completely immersed in political affairs, could not manage to maintain the spiritual tradition. Because in order to maintain the spiritual traditions, it is very necessary that you must protect and maintain the gurus. The gurus should be maintained by the nation and by the people. They were not able to do this, so the yogic culture came to an end.

The tradition is that the swamis must be kept away from politics, from administration, from bureaucracy, and from conflicting ideologies like capitalism, communism and socialism. They are not concerned with anything of this world. They are only concerned with the *vidya*, the knowledge; maybe hatha yoga, nada yoga, dhyana yoga, laya yoga, bhakti yoga, kundalini yoga, and so on.

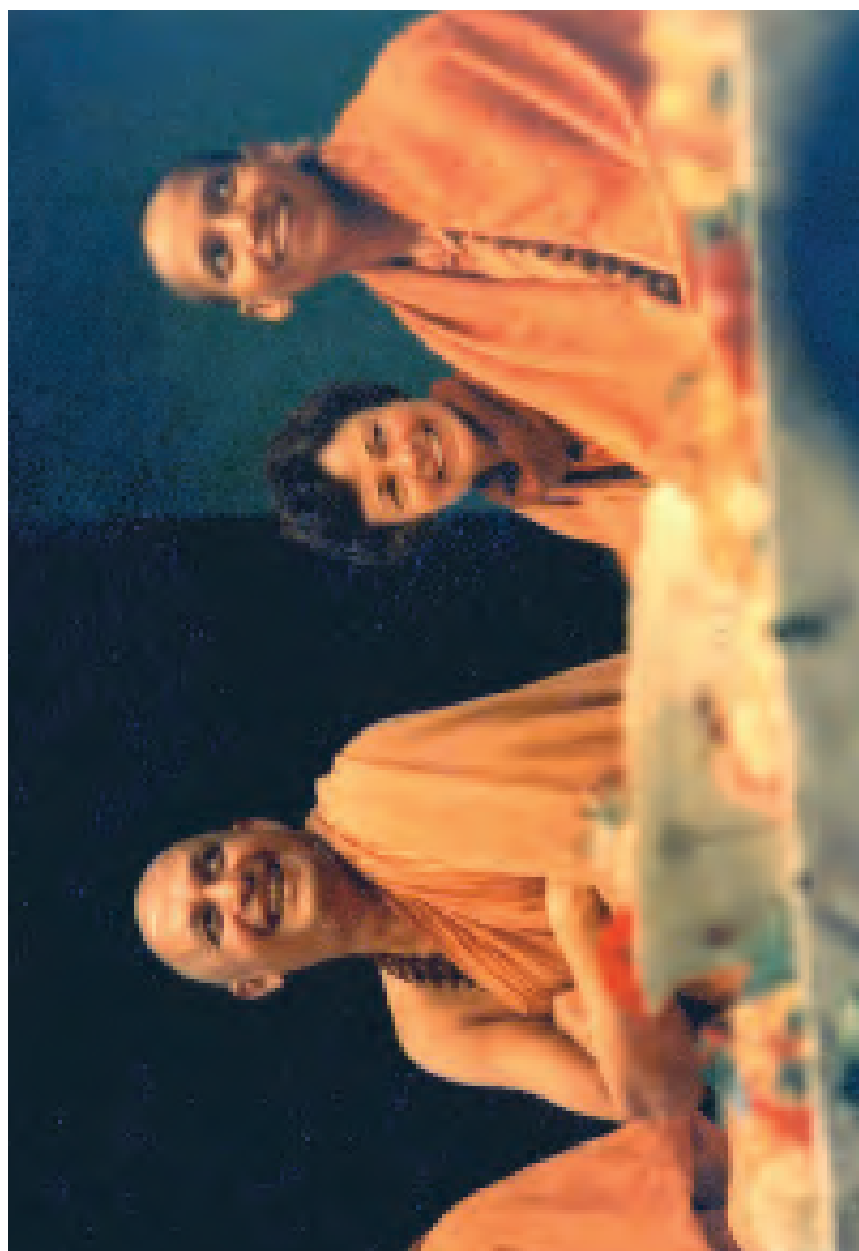
















So, in India, the society expects swamis to stay away and it fulfils their material needs. This is how India has been able to maintain its spiritual tradition perpetually, because spirituality was never used for political purposes. Religions were not exploited for colonialism. The swamis were not sent as advance guards for colonial armies. They could never utilize them for their own purposes.

Finally, for us, religion is not an end, religion is a means. For us, yoga is a means, it is not the end. The end is higher self-awareness. In order to achieve that higher awareness, you must be open to all the ways: Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, even atheism. So, anyone who can give us a knowledge by which we can control the mind, by which we can have a higher experience, by which we can know the deeper recesses of our being is welcome. That is how India has been able to maintain the tradition of yoga and the tradition of gurus for thousands of years, even when all the other ancient, spiritual cultures were lost.

You mention Atlantis. Was it that long ago that the other countries lost their gurus because of bringing them too close to politics?

About four to five thousand years ago, the cultures of South America, the Aztecs, the Incas, the Mayas, were the last to uphold that tradition.

Was it the spiritual heads, the spiritual knowledge that enabled the pyramids of Yucatan and Egypt to be built?

Yes, they were symbolisms. In South America you can see the even roads and the way they were built resembles the psychic movements inside man. The roads and houses and many things that were built by the ancient South American cultures were a replica, or a symbol, of what is in the psychic plane; just like the temples that were built in India.

Were they constructed on particular energy points? Is there an energy system in earth, as in the body, that the roads follow?

Yes. The deeper aspects of life are shakti, prana, the mind, the awareness. There are many wonderful things like the pyramids, the roads and the cities that were built depicting these aspects.

Is it the shakti that enables the psychic healers to heal, and is it shakti being generated in the pyramids which enables them to have a certain influence over matter?

Yes. Shakti can be created in the pyramids, and even in this body. Then you may utilize that force for healing or for spiritual attainment.

Is it always the same energy?

Always the same.

Science is becoming more and more interested in changes in the states of perception. Will they be able to identify shakti and say, “Yes, this shakti is an energy?”

Yes, as long as science is open.

Is it becoming more open now?

Science has always been open. There was a time when the atom was considered indivisible; now it is not. Once they were only able to deal with matter, but now they say matter has come from energy. Energy is convertible into matter and matter into energy. So those things are going on and scientists have come to a conclusion, in a way hypothetically, that there is an imperceptible amount of shakti in the whole of creation.

Would you be able to describe shakti in scientific terms? Is it magnetic or electrical, has it got a property that we could describe in modern terms?

Yes, it is possible. Shakti manifests itself in different phases. It is unseen, and at the same time it is a force that can be felt

and that can work. On one level it is also known as prana. In science it is known as the energy principle. These are the manifestations of shakti in the physical form. The higher form of shakti is knowledge and awareness, the spiritual powers and faculties.

Swami Muktananda has taught siddha yoga. Can you classify your yoga? Is it hatha, dhyana, tantra?

No, mine is integral.

Swami Muktananda describes siddha yoga as a culmination of all yogas. Is this what you mean by integral?

It doesn't matter which name he gives and which I give. When we say integral yoga, we mean the yogas which can fulfil the need of the entire personality of man. You should have karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga and jnana yoga, for the dynamic temperament, the emotional temperament, the mystical temperament and the rational temperament of man. Some people call it maha yoga, others call it siddha yoga, I just call it yoga.

Are you aware of the exact effect each asana of hatha yoga has on the body? How did you know this? Did you learn it from a previous swami or from your own inner being?

My guru was a doctor and many of my disciples are doctors. So I have always been involving myself in some way or another with the medical men who are the masters of the subject. My guru was Swami Sivananda. He wrote many books on yoga and I used to type and edit them, so I learned a lot from him. In India we had a research institute near Pune. It is still functioning, but it was working very well in those days. There was a swami there whom I was very friendly with and I used to visit him from time to time.

Do you feel that too much importance has been placed on the male-female relationship in our society? Is this restricting spiritual growth?

I think marriage is a social institution. It is not necessary for one to get married for a spiritual purpose, but it is necessary that man and woman should work together for spiritual growth.

Perhaps then there is too much emphasis placed on sexual communication rather than spiritual communication between man and woman?

I think sexual communication and spiritual communication are not two different things. I'm fifty-five and I have been thinking about this question for the last forty-two years. I have come to a point of realization that sexual life is not anti-spiritual. If properly conducted by the wise and disciplined man and woman, it can be a springboard to higher realms. It is possible to transcend sex by living through it. I have no guilt about sexual life. I have no ill opinion about sexual life. On the other hand, whether one is married or not married I have respect for him.

Many say that the world is at a crossroads. We're running out of natural resources all over the world and the economy that is based on these resources seems to be on an irretrievable slide. Will the spiritual revolution that is taking over the West affect this situation?

I think there is too much phobia, too much fear created by these ideas. I don't think the world is headed towards a crisis.

Are you more optimistic about the future?

I'm very optimistic about it. Pessimism has always been there, people talking about doomsday, about catastrophes and all that. However, I think there will be problems always and everywhere. There will be wars, fights, conflicts, change of governments. All that will happen. But at the same time, I think the world will continue towards a spiritual goal with a greater emphasis on simplicity, discipline and inner understanding.

Are these problems going to be solved by man's developed capacity to solve them?

Problems are eternal and conflicts are eternal, but what is important is the goal of man.

Most Hindu texts say that at this time we are in the middle of the Kali yuga, which lasts something like 430,000 years. Swami Yukteshwar, on the other hand, says the Kali yuga only lasts for 1,200 years, a much smaller cycle, and that now we are in Dwapara yuga. Which would you agree with?

The first statement is correct – 430,000 years.

Are we in the middle of Kali yuga at present?

No. We are at the doorstep of the Kali yuga. We just entered it about 5,038 years or so ago, after the death of Krishna.

The Kali yuga is called the age of darkness. Why do we appear to be heading towards a golden age? Do you think we are?

Yes. They call Kali yuga the age of darkness because man is not as innocent and as pure as he was a few thousand years ago. Purity is not spontaneous. In the age of darkness, man has lost touch with his purity. Now he has become too shrewd and too complicated. This is the meaning of the age of darkness.

Is this why he has lost so many of his psychic abilities?

Yes, but this Kali yuga has an additional advantage – that is, by the practice of bhakti yoga, if you devote yourself to God and sing his name, you can achieve the same result in a few days as those people in Satya yuga who practised austerities, penance and spiritual life for thousands and thousands of years. This is the greatness of the Kali yuga: that even a little spiritual practice can elevate you to superb heights.

So while being the age of darkness, it is also the age of opportunity, of great light?

Yes. You see, we are not as innocent as our ancestors were 20,000 years ago, but definitely we will have spiritual experiences.

Do you know much about the spiritual progress of man in the Atlantean time, 20,000 to 30,000 years ago? What was the situation then in comparison to Krishna's time 5,000 years ago?

After the Atlantis civilization there has been a little drawback in spiritual movements all over the world. Right up to Krishna's age there was plenty of spirituality. After his death, however, everything was disorganized. He was the last of the great yoga teachers.

So in India, from right up to 5,000 years ago, there was a great deal of spiritualism, and yet our modern history credits us with being intelligent only from that point on.

That is not correct. We may have to correct the history books. According to the modern scholars, the Vedas were written at least 25,000 years ago. In the vedic texts you will find many references to planetary positions which can be related back thousands of years.

Also in the vedic texts, there is a reference to 'ten to the minus sixth of a second'. This is approximately the time that an atomic particle takes to actually break free from its electron ring. Was the science of 25,000 years ago in excess of what we have today?

Well, I believe that science is repeating itself. Science was always there with mankind, maybe a more developed or equally developed science.

Was it more in tune spiritually?

Not necessarily, but it was developed. However, science brought about some kind of disaster to humanity and

suddenly it was suppressed. That is going to happen again here, maybe in four or five hundred years. Scientists and researchers are going to be banned. They will ban the researchers maybe after three hundred years. There is no other way. They will have to ban certain associates. They will have to suppress certain laws that the scientists are discovering. They will have to stop teaching these faculties to the public, and gradually it will become extinct after a few hundred years, or else there must be a war in which everything is burnt.

You don't know which? Does man make that decision for himself?

The best thing would be to ban the scientists. They will have to do it.

Will they carry on exploding atomic devices and using nuclear energy?

I think they will have to put a greater control over the knowledge of nuclear energy for the coming generations, for our posterity. After four or five hundred years, people will not know anything about it. It's becoming dangerous. Of course, good uses can also be made of it, but more destructive methods can be utilized. With the path of science, either it will destroy itself or the wise men will switch it off.

Is there a specific number of saints living in the world at any one time?

No. It is not possible to have a census of saintly people because there are many thousands, the whole world is subsisting on them. They may be swamis, they may not. You can't count them by their dress, by their diplomas and degrees. Saintliness is the inner spiritual state of man. It is not possible to know.

Do you see everybody as their physical body or just as some form of divine light?

I accept the body, mind and soul as three different manifestations of divinity. Just as I see what is ruled right from

this corner to that corner as this room. This is the inner part of the room, that is the outer part, this is the northern part, that is the southern part. The room is comprised of all these parts. In the same way, the body is one manifestation, mind is another manifestation and spirit is the third manifestation of the human being. So I see body as body, mind as mind, and soul as soul. I can see all three.

When a devotee in Australia is praying to his or her guru in India, how does the guru know who and where the devotee is, or is this the inner guru answering?

No. It is not the inner guru. Guru has an individual personality and guru has a universal personality. You have an individual personality, which is limited, and a universal personality. But since you are not able to govern it completely, you are not able to utilize it. So guru has one form, the physical form, other than the spiritual one. The spiritual form is ever aware. It looks after the prayers and responds to them. It helps the disciples. It is not the inner guru. Your inner guru is only the receiving pole.

You must get so many prayers all the time.

Not me, but my self. You see, you can put thousands and thousands of messages through a satellite at the same or different times, but at a particular place they are all separated. Similarly, thousands and thousands of prayers can be put through and they are classified and separated by the universal self of the guru, which has evolved by his spiritual life. It is a completely different man. It is not this man, but it is my self, two words, not one.

Do you feel you have been given a mission in this life that you have to fulfil as your karma, or is it a choice that you go around teaching all these people?

No, my philosophy is simply living. That is why I like the title of your magazine. I said to myself, that is me – I'm simply living.

In your ashram I have heard some of your devotees are researching psychic healing and such things as pyramids.

Yes, there are many swamis who are involved in researching. They are reading, investigating, trying to find out. This is very important in order to bring the knowledge to mankind.

Some gurus say it is not important to question those particular sorts of mysteries.

Yes, we don't question it. But there are some people who do and therefore we have to answer them.

Have they come up with results?

They are coming close to it.

Do you already know the answer to what they are looking for?

So far as science is concerned, we should wait a little more and try to find the answer.

If there is no separate divinity from human beings and other manifestations of energy, if we are all that one energy, where do revelations come from? Where does this divine knowledge come from? If it is already within us, what programmed it in the first place? In other words, what brings us the manifested words from God?

You see, the divinity is immanent as well as transcendent, therefore I will say the divinity is in man and beyond man.

At the same time?

Yes. Creation is divine, but still divinity transcends creation. So, I belong to that school of thought where creation is the manifestation of divinity, but this is not the whole divinity. It is just a manifestation of divinity. Divinity is immanent in the whole creation, but still divinity is transcending creation. This is the aspect that everyone has to get very clear.

Now, therefore, we come to this incarnation and try to become aware of our inherent spiritual nature. After we have

realized our inherent spiritual nature that is divine, then we transcend ourselves. We must have both experiences: the experience of immanence and at the same time we must have the experience that I'm not only Brahman, but Brahman is something else also. He is here, but he is beyond this.

This is duality?

Yes.

Can the reason for disease be spiritual as well as physical?

Physical, mental and spiritual.

Is there a way to know if one should be going to see one's guru about one's problem or whether one should see a doctor or healer?

I think when one is suffering from a physical problem, one must go to a doctor. According to yoga, even if the disease is caused by mental factors, still through the mind-body relationship, the cause has already affected the body and therefore it has to be treated on a physical level. If a person with a lot of difficulties has some kind of heart disease or lung disease, the influence has been manifesting on the physical plane, therefore it must be treated on the physical plane and at the same time on the mental and spiritual plane. So the treatments must work side by side.

Does the mantra possess the power to purify food and heal somebody who is close to you?

Mantra can heal a person who is close to you. Mantra can purify the environment. Mantra can calm the mind; it is a force by itself. You can use it in any way you like.

Babies appear to look at our auras in the first few weeks of their life, but then after some time they seem to lose this ability. Is that due to the closing of the fontanel?

Yes. They are away from maya.

Does this have to happen when the fontanel closes?

They have to live in the world. They have to become aware of the senses, the mind, the dualities.

How does one help to stop a child's ego from overdeveloping in the sense of becoming overbearing and aggressive?

I think children should not be suppressed. The personality must grow, the ego must also develop, but you must create a way for their spiritual advancement. That you can do either by living that life yourself or by allowing them to follow their own nature without any obstruction from your side. We should not try to force the children, we should not try to mould them in our pattern, nor to modify their personality in any way. Children must follow their own nature and not only you.

How are drugs detrimental to the spiritual body?

They completely disconnect the junctions of various faculties. They destroy the crossroads where the faculties cross with each other. It is like having many roads, but the junction of the roads is completely demolished and destroyed. I have used drugs myself for a long time and I have been the loser. In the beginning the mind is restless for some time. You are unable to train the mind by the practice of yoga. Then it may be necessary to take just a selected type of drug in order to calm the tendencies of the mind. Such drugs are not found in modern society, but we know them. These can be used for a short time, but later on one must completely stop the use of drugs in spiritual life, because it withdraws the soul, withdraws the spirit and recharges the illusion of sex.

What are the spiritual dangers of eating meat?

I think there is no harm in eating meat (although I personally don't take it), drinking, or sexual interactions because these are the natural tendencies of every being. But if you are able to leave them for some time, it will speed up your spiritual life. Meat-eating does not kill the spiritual prospects, but

total vegetarianism will increase the spiritual experience. It is something like a car which can travel at high speeds without a heavy load.

Is it possible for a householder to reach the heights that a sannyasin does?

The highest point of spiritual life is obtainable by the householder and sannyasin both. The life of the householder, if it is properly conducted, can lead him to the highest pinnacle of spiritual life, provided he becomes aware of the spiritual things in life.

But would it be harder for him?

Well, there are householders who are aware of spiritual life although they live with their wife and children, husband and family. They are following the spiritual ideals and upholding the spiritual values in life. Therefore, one need not renounce or become a sannyasin in order to live a higher life.

One can, but does not have to?

Ashram life only provides him with deeper awareness of his spiritual life and gives him an alternate experience.

Could you explain to the people who want to start on this path what they should do?

Daily practice of whatever you know, mantra, hatha yoga, raja yoga, worship, satsang, dhyana yoga, meditation. There is no particular yoga which one must begin with. Start wherever you are. If you want to go to Sydney, well, you go from Mangrove. But if somebody is in some other place, he doesn't have to come to Mangrove first. Everybody has his own starting point. After some time, you come to the same destination. The ultimate aim is one, the rules are different, the starting points are different. Everyone must practise something, minimum ten minutes.

17

Evolution of Consciousness through Meditation

Satyananda Ashram, Mangrove Mountain, Australia, 10 October 1978.

We are here to reflect upon a greater life. The outer life, the life that is transitory, the life that is empirical, the life that is subject to time and space and objectivity, is well known to us. Therefore, it is not necessary to have a guru to teach us about it. Everyone knows how to experience this outer life through the senses and the mind. So, I am not going to discuss that here, because you have not come here for that.

Experience of this physical body, of pleasure and pain, of emotion, commotion and passion, of love and hatred, everyone knows. But there is another experience, a spiritual experience, which mankind in general has not experienced so far, except for a few fortunate souls in the past. This spiritual experience has to be known through life and beyond life.

No matter what you do, how you live or where you live, this experience can come to you. This is a total experience, it is the closest experience and the whole structure of yoga is woven around it. If you ask me, “What is yoga?”, I would reply, “To be able to unite your present consciousness with that experience, that is yoga.”

Every practice of yoga leads to that experience, just as it said, ‘all roads lead to Rome’. Whether it is hatha yoga, raja yoga, kundalini yoga, mantra yoga, bhakti yoga, karma

yoga or jnana yoga; all the forms of yoga ultimately develop and refine the lower consciousness, and make it capable of apprehending that spiritual awareness.

For thousands of years, mankind has been thinking about this. A few great souls, the rishis, the saints, the sons of God, have had that experience. They became one with the Supreme Beatitude. Our forefathers saw them and also tried to have the same experience, but somehow or other the climate was not suitable, or the environment was not congenial.

In our century, the whole climate is changing and even those who did not want to have that experience before, now want to have it. Even the sceptics wish to have that experience and want to talk about it. Humanity cannot escape now. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Vedas, and the Bible, it is written that the ultimate destiny of man must come to him. This experience of the Supreme Beatitude is our destiny. It is the destiny of the whole of mankind. So, today we are experiencing an uprising of spiritual seeking, an uprising of spiritual consciousness, an uprising of spiritual discovery.

The blind man and the gate

You seek pleasure, don't you? Yes, you do. Why do you seek pleasure? Why do you seek love? Man has been searching for something of which he knows nothing. His searches lead him through the dimensions of pleasure, love, pain, frustration, tragedy and comedy. But now all of these erroneous ways of seeking must come to an end.

We know the method, we know the way, and it is foolish to go on searching for the experience in a blindfolded way. We have been searching like blind men trying to find a piece of chocolate. We haven't really been seekers of pleasure, love, passion, commotion. It is due to blindness that we have been following these paths. That is the problem, and now we are not able to get out of the pleasant, sensual experiences.

I remember a parable. There was a blind man wandering around inside a fort which had four gates. He wanted to get out of this fort, so he asked a wise man how he could do it.

The man told him, “Hold onto the fort wall with one hand and keep walking. The moment you come to the gate, you will know and be able to get out.”

So, the blind man held onto the wall of the fort with his right hand and started to walk. Unfortunately, when he came to the gate, he began scratching himself and so he missed it. Then he went further, still holding onto the wall, but when the second gate came, again he scratched himself. In this way he passed by all four gates, although they were there. I think that we are also like that. Many times in life we have passed by the gate, but we started scratching ourselves and missed it.

Meditation is the way

We have to know and realize that the most important thing in yoga is dhyana. Meditation is the answer; it is the way. When, through meditation, you are able to transcend the idea of the body, when you are able to forget the notion of name and form, when you are able to rise above past memories, and when you are able to have even a blurred vision of something which is non-physical, then you are on the path.

Those who are able to see the light, to experience the space or the sound within, are on the path. We live in the body, we are aware of the body, but we are not able to transcend it, unless we are deeply asleep. We have to discover a conscious practice by which we can gradually transcend the experience of duality, of name and form, until we are able to jump over the ego principle. This jumping over the ego principle is samadhi. It is not an easy affair, but it is something we have to accomplish.

I believe that this is the purpose of human existence, otherwise it has no logical justification. If we are born as human beings because of what we have been doing up till now, then there is no fun in it, no logic in it. We have just been living a superior kind of animal life. We are civilized animals, doing the same things in a different way. If animals eat grass, we cook it and eat it. If animals procreate in the

field or forest, we procreate in a modern home. Of course, that is not bad, I'm not criticizing it. I'm only trying to create a comparison between our life and animal life.

Animal life belongs to the dimension of instinct. In the process of evolution there are three distinct divisions: instinct, intellect and intuition. Instinct belongs to the animal kingdom. When I say that we have been exhibiting instinct in our lives, it does not mean that we have a tail and two horns. Instinct is the quality we have inherited from the unevolved, tamasic, animal kingdom, in which there is no spiritual response. The moment you have spiritual response, spiritual hunger, you are out of the area of instinct.

Instinctive behaviour will continue with us for a very long time, because we have a body. We don't have to throw it away, but along with the instincts that sustain the body, the human being has to develop intuition, the higher strata of the mind, so that he is able to comprehend his own completeness, his own perfection, his real identity. We have, in fact, forgotten our real identity.

If you ask me who I am, I will cite my name, my tribe, my clan, my nationality – but am I that? Who am I? Have you ever posed this question to yourself? Who am I? Am I this body with a certain name and with a certain social status? If I am only that, then the whole spiritual philosophy is bunkum. If I am what I can comprehend at this moment and nothing beyond that, if that is my identity, my description, my definition – this physical body, this name, this Australian, Hindu, Muslim, Christian, this man, this woman – then don't talk of spiritual life.

The spiritual life begins when I start to doubt my definition of myself, when I begin to question: "Who am I? Am I this body? Am I the mind? Am I the senses? Am I the experience of pain and pleasure? Am I the time? Am I the space?" Finally I have to come to the conclusion, "No, I am not this. I am a seer of this. I am not the body. I am a seer, a witness of the body. I am not the mind, but I see the mind. I am not the pain and pleasure, I witness them. I am not all this. I am a

seer of all this. Whatever I see around me or within me, with my eyes open or closed, I know I am not that.”

One has to separate oneself from all those elements that are subject to time and space, and objectivity and duality. It is for this purpose that everyone has to experience the depth of meditation. The little experience you have in meditation is transitory; it is not abiding. The experience has to go through a series of changes. Every day, every week, it can be different. All the experiences which you go through when you are practising meditation are not the ultimate experience.

There is a series of experiences in a sequence which will ultimately lead to that experience, which is called the self experience, the spiritual experience, the experience of non-duality or the experience of oneness. In between the experience which we have achieved up to this moment, and that experience which I am talking about, there are thousands and thousands of experiences which a spiritual aspirant has to go through, necessarily.

For this purpose, the ways and paths have been laid down, and they are known as meditation. Our spiritual efforts should be dedicated to this purpose. I have always been telling you that everything in life is alright, but it is not final. You must have something more. In order to have it, let us accept meditation as a way for us, and through the practice of meditation develop the powers of consciousness.

The fulfilment of a dream

It is with this in view that we have created this Mangrove Mountain complex. Although we have not yet been able to do what we had in our minds, it will surely happen. Now I would like to put a picture of the future before you, so that all of you can participate and cooperate in making it a reality. Soon we will have more small huts, not mansions, but huts, similar to those you already see here. These huts will be used by all of you who visit this place from time to time. You can spend a few days or weeks in an atmosphere of relaxation, tranquillity and quietness, following your path, whatever it

is. These little huts will provide you with a place where you can experiment on the evolution of consciousness.

These are beautiful words, 'the evolution of consciousness'. We have heard about the growth of the body and mind in physiology and psychology, but we have not heard much about the evolution of consciousness. What is this consciousness which has to evolve? From where and to where? This evolution of spiritual consciousness takes place in a quiet atmosphere, in a simple environment, different from that which you have been living in, different from modern towns and cities. Here, in a hut, everything is simplified, everything is different from what you are used to.

The people who are working here in Mangrove, and also all of you who have been participating in this project, should keep in mind that you will have to play your part well in the fulfilment of this little but very effective dream which has to come true. I have spoken to the swamis here and said, "Build one hundred and fifty kutirs, cottages, huts – minimum." This is where you will come and stay for two days or longer, in a hut, with a sleeping bag. There won't be many amenities, but you will be able to follow your practices.

All of you must remember that you have a responsibility to fulfil this project. Forget the mansions. Forget rooms with attached bathrooms. Forget hot water for the time being, and forget about modern kitchens. By the side of your hut put two bricks, take a little bit of wood, take your can and boil your tea, you don't have to depend on the kitchen. From time to time, this is how you can get out of your busy life and plan your weekends for the evolution of consciousness.

The light of the self

Today, throughout the world, I find that people have become disillusioned and they have also come to understand that there is nothing else except spiritual life that will give them contentment. This everyday life can give satisfaction which is not lasting, but spiritual life can give contentment which is everlasting. Millions of people throughout the world cannot

find the right atmosphere. There are no ashrams such as this, no such communities, no such places where they can retire, close to their cities, for a day or two or three or more, where they can just look within and take an inner flight to assist this spiritual evolution.

We are here for three days. All of you will have discussions on health, mind and body, but I will only emphasize this one point, the evolution of consciousness through meditation, dhyana yoga. When the eyes are closed, the mind is open. When the mind is closed, the senses are experiencing. When experience is also closed, what remains is the self. There is a dialogue in one of the Upanishads where a sage was asked by his disciple:

“Oh guru, how do we see?”

“By the light of the sun,” he replied.

“How does one see when the sun sets?” the disciple asked again.

“By the light of the moon,” he replied.

“Then, how does one see when the moon has set?” asked the disciple.

“By the light of the twinkling stars,” the guru said.

“Guru, when the stars are no more, the moon has set and the sun has set, how does one see?” asked the disciple once more.

“By the light of his own self,” the guru replied.

When the eyes are closed, still you can see. When the mind is closed, still you can see. When the visions are closed, still you can see. When everything is blocked and closed and has stopped functioning, still you can see. And what you see is the truth.

18

Bhakti and Dhyana

Satyananda Ashram, Mangrove Mountain, Australia, 10 October 1978.

This morning I spoke to you about the prime importance of spiritual life, because people throughout the world today want spiritual clarity. But when everything is said, the last question remains, “What to do?” I gave you a very clear hint that we have to plunge ourselves into the art and act of meditation. Dhyana is the technical word used in yoga for meditation. The word ‘meditation’ does not convey the whole import, so we will first explain dhyana yoga.

Stages of the practice

In the *Yoga Sutras*, which is the official, technical manual on yoga, meditation is defined as the stage when ‘the mind has been able to transcend the knowledge of smell, sound, touch, form and taste, and at the same time, the consciousness is functioning around one point’. This is the classical definition of *dhyana*. It is not the act of concentration, when we are trying to concentrate, to consolidate the dissipated energies of our mind. That is not dhyana; it is the way to dhyana.

What we have been doing in our yoga classes with the swamis here and with teachers elsewhere is not dhyana. There are three distinct stages in the practice. The first stage leads to sensory withdrawal, the second stage leads to concentration

and the third stage leads to meditation, dhyana. It is not the mind that we have to tackle first; it is sensations, the knowledge of the five senses. If you close your eyes, you are only blocking the sensation of form. What about the ears? You can still hear so many sounds.

To give an example, if you focus your mind on one point and try to concentrate on it, what happens? The senses feed the mind, and they continue to feed the mind throughout. The messages keep coming to the brain, and the brain, therefore, remains in an excited condition. In the practice of dhyana yoga, the first thing you have to accomplish is to cut the supply routes which constantly send messages to the brain during wakefulness, during sleep and during dreams. That is the first stage of dhyana yoga.

In the second stage, you have to concentrate on one point. The point could be anything: a cross, your guru, a black dog, a flower, a light, a star. What is important is that the object of meditation which you have selected is absolutely a spontaneous choice of your mind, so that you don't have to force it. For instance, it is easy for me to recapitulate the form of my guru because I lived with him for twelve years. It is difficult for me to visualize a form which I have not seen.

When you are trying to concentrate, it is not the divinity of the object which is important, it is the fraternity of the object with you, how close you feel with it, how spontaneous you are with it, how comprehensive and intimate your relationship is with that object. If you do not feel these things, then you will find your concentration very hard. Again and again your mind will become dissipated. I will give you a parable.

A matter of heart

Once upon a time a young girl was going to meet her boyfriend. She was deeply engrossed in the awareness of him. In the lane through which she was passing, a Muslim had spread his mat and was repeating his prayers. Muslims pray five times a day, anywhere and everywhere, even in the middle of the road. They

are very strict about their prayer time. So he had spread his mat and was saying his prayers, "Allah, Allah, Allah."

However, the girl was so engrossed in thoughts of her lover that she walked right over the mat and kept going. The gentleman who was praying could not control himself. He got up and shouted at her, "Arrogant, shameless, uncivilized." But the girl continued walking and did not respond. The man became furious and ran after her calling, "Hey, hey!" and again she gave no reply. Then he blocked her way and demanded, "Why did you walk over my mat?"

The girl was taken aback and said, "What mat? What do you mean?" The man said, "You unholy wretch! I was praying and you walked over my mat." The girl paused for a moment and then gave a very revealing reply, "I was so engrossed in thoughts of my lover that I did not see you or your mat. How is it that you could have seen me walk over your mat if you were praying to God?"

Therefore, the object which you select for concentration should be like the beloved of the girl, not the beloved of the man. That is where most of us have been making a great mistake. All of the saints, from the vedic rishis to Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, right down to the present day, have been stressing the same note, bhakti yoga. Your object of concentration should be related to you through your heart, not through your intellect. The mantra and the deity, which are the basis for consolidation of dissipated energy, should be a matter of heart more than head.

Spontaneity of devotion

What is heart? It is a spontaneity of feeling, selection and choice. When you want to get off the mental plane, you have to use a greater force. A little bit of practice with a dry mantra here and a dry deity there will not do. One of the great saints of India was Mirabai. She was a princess and a queen, then she became a swami, a sannyasin. She left her kingdom and devoted her whole life to the spiritual quest until she reached the final destination. Every Indian knows

her songs. Mirabai says that when there is infinite love, there is no further practice. My beloved is in me, and therefore I don't have to go anywhere.

This spontaneity of devotion, this bhakti yoga, is the culminating point which everyone should remember. When one wants to evolve in spiritual life, dry raja yoga will not do; full, exciting kundalini yoga will not do. I have absolute respect for all these because I teach them. I am not criticizing them. I am only pointing out their limitations. You have to awaken the devotional aspect in yourself, and don't say that you don't have it. If you did not have this stuff in you, how could you love, how could you hate, how could you be sad, how could you be happy?

Emotion, passion, attachment, the knowledge and feeling of pleasure and pain are based on or are the offspring of this stuff called *bhava*, attitude and *bhakti*, devotion. It is a very important point that we have to ponder in our lives. We have been living the life of a Christian, devoted to Christ and God and church. Or we have been living the life of a Hindu, devoted to Hindu dharma, the temple, Rama and Krishna, and so forth.

In the course of time, all of these religious formalities have followed a tradition of decadence. There is nothing wrong in them, but everything has degenerated and decayed. Our gurus, in Hinduism as well as in Christianity, have failed to explain how bhakti is intimately connected with the emotions and passions of our lives. Just as a passionate man loves a woman, so we must approach our deity with the same force, the same urge, the same attitude and the same spontaneity. Do you have to make an effort when you love somebody? No. It's not difficult. Maybe sometimes you have to control yourself.

Guru comes first

There is a certain technique by which bhakti will become spontaneous, by which this dormant substance, this latent quality of bhakti will become a reality in your life. Ramakrishna Paramahansa was once travelling with a disciple in a small boat.

The disciple said, “Paramahamsaji, please tell me how to feel the spontaneity of love for God.” Ramakrishna at once became angry and said, “What nonsense you are speaking!” He promptly threw him into the river and told the boatman to row on.

Now, the disciple didn’t know how to swim and he was struggling and gasping for breath; he was pining for life. Finally the boatman went back and rescued him. After sometime, when the man had recovered from his dunking, Ramakrishna asked, “How did you find the experience?” The disciple replied, “Only one thing was in my mind – how to survive, how to live, I may die.”

This is the way we should think and feel when we sit for meditation. There should be nothing in our minds but guru, nothing but our faithful deity. But it is not there. Why? Because we have been practising dhyana yoga without developing our love to the fullest extent. We have been practising transcendental meditation, Rajneesh meditation, ajapa japa meditation, without fully developing, manifesting, or exposing the bhakti aspect of our lives.

This bhakti aspect of our life has been misled. We have been squandering the bhakti. Where has our bhakti gone? To the pictures, to the television, from one man to another man, from one girl to another girl, from one type of dress to another type of dress. We have been squandering this great, priceless gem, this gift of eternal reality which every animal, every vegetable, every human being possesses, which everything has. And this bhakti has to be developed.

Therefore, the one who ignites the dormant bhakti in your personality, the guru, comes first in spiritual life. Once the bhakti is accomplished, dhyana yoga becomes spontaneous. You close your eyes and things start happening. For the awakening of this bhakti, guru is the first, the second is kirtan and the third is satsang.

Importance of satsang

Satsang is association, congregation, conference, meeting with the people who discuss and talk about the things pertaining

to spiritual life – not politics, sociology, finances, romance, weather, fashion or food, but spiritual life. This congregation where we are meeting at this moment is a satsang. *Sang* means ‘coming together’ and *sat* means ‘truth, reality, spirit’. Satsang is very important. Someone must tell us the stories of those great saints who had the vision of the Supreme.

Longfellow, the poet, said that we have to read the lives of the great saints to make our own lives sublime. Throughout history, these saints have led a unique type of life. They have experimented with a new system of life, a new conduct, a new way of thinking. They were revolutionaries of their time. I have read practically all of them: the Hindu saints, the Christian saints, the Sufi saints, the Muslim saints, the Hebrew saints and the Greek saints. If you go through their lives, they will inspire you. Their inspiration will awaken the bhakti. This is how we have to plod on with our spiritual consciousness.

A new type of life

We have to perfect dhyana yoga, and there are a few points regarding this which I will put before you at our next meeting. It is important for all of you that a systematic practice should be followed at home. Those of you who have been practising should continue, but those who are new and have exposed themselves for the first time to a spiritual congregation must remember very well that what we have so far done with our lives has not paid any dividend. We have been groping in darkness, and it is time that we opened ourselves to a new type of life, a life which does not hinder the external life, but which unfolds the beatitude of the inner life.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to say to his disciples, “Look here, food is necessary for the body and so is sleep because that is the dharma, the urge of the physical body. But you have neglected the needs of the spiritual body.” By dedicating yourself to the spiritual purpose and by pursuing this path with the utmost sincerity and diligence, you will be the richest person on earth. Of what avail are riches if

they cannot give you peace of mind and tranquillity, mental balance and understanding of your own self?

Even if you are an ordinary person with just a few dollars in your pocket, but you have equilibrium and understanding of yourself and confidence in what you exist for, then you are not only the richest person, you are the president of all nations. You have seen in history that an ordinary person like Christ could be the king of kings. What was Ramakrishna? An ordinary priest. What was Saint Francis? All the saints and sages have realized that the real riches, the real prosperity, the real wealth lies within one's own self.

Therefore, side by side with the life you have been leading so far, you must diligently pursue and follow the path of dhyana yoga.



19

Pain and Pleasure

Satyananda Ashram, Mangrove Mountain, Australia, 10 October 1978.

Pain and pleasure are attitudes of the human mind. When the mind is under the sway of *tamas* and *rajas*, the two lower qualities of human evolution, then it is in a state of psychosis and neurosis. When, by evolution and constant *sadhana*, you transcend the realm of *tamas* and *rajas* and develop the *sattwic* tendencies of the mind, then pain and pleasure lose their meaning.

In this life, everyone has their own sufferings. Our attitude is dependent upon what is happening in our personal life. I lose my business and you lose a beautiful wife. When I have lost my near and dear one, why should I not feel free? Because the mind has been trained from time immemorial to behave in a particular fashion, and we react to different situations in our lives as per the conditioning.

By spiritual practice, by exposing yourself to spiritual environments, and at the same time, through a process of self-enquiry, *jnana yoga*, it may change slightly. Even if you are not able to change your attitude completely, like the great saints did, you can definitely make certain amendments which will be in the interests of your personal happiness.

Once, St Francis and Brother Leo were going to Assisi. They were ordinary mendicants, mind you, not saints as we

think of them now, just ordinary beggars. On the way, they stopped at a monastery in the middle of the night. It was snowing. They knocked on the door, hoping to be received by one of God's emissaries. However, the gatekeeper opened the door, looked at the two scruffy beggars, abused them soundly and slammed the door in their faces. So they had no shelter the whole night. It was freezing cold; they were shivering and hungry too.

Again St Francis knocked at the door. The monk opened it and came out. He kicked both of them out onto the road where it was snowing and below freezing point, and then he went back inside, slammed the door and bolted it. They were ordinary beggars with weak bodies. They had travelled for miles and miles with great difficulty, barefoot and dressed in rags. Brother Leo was very angry, but Francis kept quiet.

The doorkeeper who had kicked them suddenly had another thought in his mind. He began to feel compassion for the two beggars he had kicked. They were out in the snow; it was freezing cold. His human nature spoke to him. His animal nature retired. He felt a little bit of compassion. He decided he should check to see if they were still there because if they died, the police might come and interrogate him.

The monk went outside and found the two shivering by the roadside. He brought them in and sat them down by the fire. He offered them something hot to drink and they quietly took it. Then the monk asked, "Do you mind that I kicked you?" Brother Leo was ready to give a sharp reply, as most of us would do.

However, St Francis replied, "No, no. For me life is all a game, an expression of the divine plan, and everything that happens in life is a part of the cosmic plan. If you kick me or if you bring me inside and serve me with hot things and make me comfortable, it makes no difference. Both are subjects of the mind and body."

These subjects are not subjects of the soul, the *atman*, the self, the Supreme Consciousness. One who lives in the body reacts to physical stimuli. One who lives in the mind reacts

to mental stimuli. But one who lives in the soul, the atman, the self, reacts to the soul. How can he react to the physical and the mental bodies?

Saints and sages of the calibre of St Francis are rare, but that is the goal which we have to achieve if we want to get out of pain. We can't run away from it. Pain and pleasure follow us like shadows, and unless we are able to transcend the body and mind, we cannot get away from them. For this purpose, the intelligent and sincere practice of yoga should be followed.

Intellectually we can never transcend pain and pleasure. Through yoga, however, we can definitely do it. The great saints and sages have left their mark in history so that we may be able to follow and walk in their footsteps. They are our lights; they are our guides. It is their path we have to follow.



20

The Philosophy of Yoga

Satyananda Ashram, Mangrove Mountain, Australia, 11 October 1978.

Outside I hear some children crying and laughing and making sounds. I don't see them, but I hear them. What they are doing is not perceivable to my eyes, but I know about the noise going on behind the curtain. In the same way there is some noise going on within all of us behind the curtain. We are not able to see it, but we feel it. That noise is going on within the mind. It causes restlessness, anxiety, disturbance, it diverts our attention and distracts us.

This noise has to be silenced. That is the purpose and the mission of yoga. This is why yoga should be learned. Even if you change your situation in life – your house, apartment, job or business, country, guru, method of sadhana, husband or wife – unless you can change and silence this screaming child within you, you can never experience peace and joy, you can never be at rest. It is no good blaming the circumstances, your job, business, health, wife, husband, bank balance or property. There is only one thing that has to be laid to rest and that is the mind; this is yoga's philosophy.

Where psychology ends, yoga begins

The philosophy of yoga rallies around one thing – the mind. Have you read the book *Four Chapters on Freedom*? If not,

please get one and read it. The first sutra of Sage Patanjali, the author of the *Yoga Sutras*, says: “The definition of yoga is to be able to control the tendencies of the mind.” Some people say that the definition of yoga is union of the individual soul with the cosmic soul. Others have their own definitions, but Sage Patanjali defines *yoga* precisely, as having absolute control over all the tendencies of the mind.

These tendencies of the mind are formations on the superstructure of the mind. Mind is consciousness, *chitta*. The homogeneity of consciousness throws out waves, just as a pond throws out ripple after ripple when pebbles are thrown into it. The formations on the superstructure of the mind are the tendencies of the mind which we experience in our day-to-day life. Anger is not unholy, passion is not a sin, hatred is not evil, jealousy is not a demon. These are the tendencies of the mind caused by the external stimuli of the life which we face during the period of the experience of *raga* and *dvesha*, love and hatred, attraction and repulsion, passion and anger.

I can assure you that these tendencies can never be controlled unless we go to the very base. The base is *chitta*, the mind, not the formations of the mind. Once you have been able to hold total control over the whole *chitta*, you are master of the subject. Yoga is nothing but this. It is not magic, not a religion, not a cult, not a mystic philosophy. It is just a science of the whole mind. Psychology is a science of mental symptoms, yoga is the science of the whole mind. Therefore, where psychology ends, yoga begins. Psychology talks about symptoms but we don't talk about the symptoms; we talk about the whole object.

What is the mind then? Mind is a reflection of Supreme Consciousness. The mind that is free from disturbances and psychotic manifestations, free from all of its so-called attributes, the mind as it is, a thing in itself, that mind is a clue to the cosmic consciousness. Indeed, the person who has been able to visualize the mind without its external manifestations can reach the highest experience.

Therefore, the first principle is that yoga is a science of discipline. The second is that yoga is total control over the tendencies of the mind. The third is that through yoga you become aware of your inner being. The fourth is that by becoming aware of your inner being, you become free from the day-to-day turmoil that makes you move like a shuttlecock from one end to the other, or like a boat on the ocean. This is the yoga which we have been practising, discussing and trying to learn.

Dhyana yoga – the closest definition

The description of dhyana yoga, the yoga of meditation, that I gave in the earlier satsang is the nearest definition I can give which you can understand. By dhyana, you should not understand that you close your eyes and enter into a state of total darkness and unconsciousness. Dhyana is a dynamic state of awareness. It is a state of awareness in which you know nothing of this lower existence, but you know everything is one. *Dhyana* is at once total awareness of the one, and total unawareness of everything else but the one. It is when meditation comes to the point of fulfilment.

When meditation has matured, when the consciousness blooms within, at that time awareness does not die. The light of the soul does not get extinguished, but a great revolution takes place within. One dies, surely one dies. It has been hinted at by St John of the Cross, “By God, I swear I die every night.” The death of normal consciousness takes place and at that time the inner consciousness blooms. When inner awareness flourishes, external awareness which leads to the knowledge of time, space and objectivity dies. So, here in meditation you die and here you are reborn.

At this moment we live in the body, we know by the senses, we think by the mind. We are alive here on the external plane, but we are dead in the inner consciousness. Can you experience the inner dimension? No. Can you experience this external life? Yes. I experience this world. I am aware of time, space, objects and duality. I am, I know, therefore

I am alive. But what about the inner consciousness? Am I aware of it? No. Do I experience it? No. In meditation I see many things, but I know they are not that. They are the way to that.

All that you see in meditation, all that you experience from candle flame, to flower, to angel, the sky, the moon, the gardens, the oceans, none of them is that. That experience has no form, no attributes. One cannot say that experience was like this. That experience has no comparison because that experience is only that experience.

Qualities of the mind

Dhyana yoga is the nearest possible definition of yoga for us. Asana, pranayama and all other forms of concentration are accessories; they are aids for the different categories of the mind. If we belong to the sattwic category of the mind, then only meditation will do. Please note this point carefully. Close your eyes and *Hari Om Tat Sat*. However, we have some rajasic nature in us. We have passions, we can't deny it. We have ambitions and desire for acquisition.

Involvement in activity, restlessness for acquiring something, desiring to have something you have already experienced are all rajasic. When you have a rajasic nature, direct meditation is not possible. Then you have to go through the practices of sense withdrawal, which are known as *pratyahara* in raja yoga. These include *ajapa japa*, *antar mouna*, *trataka*, *nada yoga*, *kriya yoga*, *laya yoga*, *mantra yoga* and various forms of pranayama.

If you have a tamasic nature, which is full of procrastination, laziness and too much sleeping – going to bed late at night and waking up late in the morning, then the sadhana, the practices, are different. But remember that we are never single quality beings. We are a mixture of the three *gunas* or qualities of nature. Our mind is a composition of *sattwa*, *rajas* and *thamas*. All three qualities compose the structure of the mind, and we are a combination of them while being either predominantly sattwic, rajasic or tamasic.

When we are predominantly sattvic, we have to follow the course of meditation directly. Close your eyes and bring the mind to one point, just like a jumbo jet. But when we are rajasic, we have difficulty because we are tied down to the gravity of maya. We are all representatives of maya, which is beautiful and false. These are the two qualities of maya. Our mind is tied down to the gravity of maya and we are unable to get out of it unless we have a higher force attached to the mind. In order to get out of the pull of gravity, the centre of gravity, we need additional power, strength and energy. Therefore, when the mind is rajasic and tamasic, we practise asana, pranayama, kirtan and bhajan, mantra, austerities, and live a simple, harmonious life. All of these things are taught in the lower forms of yoga.

Hari Om Tat Sat

With these few words on yoga I wish you all enduring inspiration. As you know, we have cholera injections which last for only six months, smallpox injections last for three years and yellow fever lasts for ten years – that is enduring. I have had only one yellow fever injection in all these years and it is still on my health certificate. But this cholera business comes up again and again and I have to take it. Smallpox once in three years is no problem. In the same way, let this inspiration be an enduring one, so that you do not have to put another entry on your health certificate.

When you go back home, the first thing you should teach your children is *Hari Om Tat Sat*. *Om* is the Supreme, Transcendental Being. *Hari* is all-pervading, immanent reality. The supreme reality is not only here, it is everywhere. So *Hari* represents the immanent reality that is everywhere. *Om* represents the transcendental reality that is beyond attributes, beyond gunas, beyond name and form, beyond maya. That is *Om*. *Tat* is ‘That’; *Sat* is ‘this existence’. So that is real and this existence is also real. We have to see the reality on both planes, the immanent as well as the transcendent. Therefore, I always say *Hari Om Tat Sat*.

Now I have explained exactly what *Hari Om Tat Sat* means. When your children open their mouths, *Hari Om*. When you bear them, always give them good samskaras, good karma, *Hari Om*. If you have missed the great opportunities of spontaneous spiritual revelations, why should your children miss out? You have been making great efforts to spiritualize yourselves because your parents failed to do so, but why should you fail your children? They should grow up in such an atmosphere that spiritual awareness is a spontaneous event in their lives. This is how a new psychic race will be born. All of you should be the harbingers of that psychic race.

In this beautiful place, Mangrove Mountain, between the two mountains, we have lived for a few days beneath the orange trees and in the tent with the children, good friends, lots of salad, Lebanese bread and chai, and cool, refreshing water. That is the beauty of this place. You do not get hot water. I hope to be here with you all once again.

You should now make it a point to hurry up the building work. Very soon, behind these bushes, imperceptible to passers-by, hundreds of huts must come up where you will all stay. Those of you who want to build a hut of your own should come forward. The huts will be very sattwic from the outside, but if you like, you can make them a little bit rajasic inside. We have lived in rajoguna for decades and it has become a habit to expect it, so we can't throw it away all of a sudden. Next time we will definitely have a convention and only true aspirants will come.



21

Relaxation and Meditation

*Riverina College of Advanced Education, Wagga Wagga, Australia,
14 October 1978.*

The place that I come from is just like your town Wagga Wagga, and in the stillness of this atmosphere we are going to talk about yoga. In fact, the most important point in yoga is mental quietude, and there is nothing in this world that can give us the required mental quietness. Many of us are aware of the restlessness of the mind and many are not. As the mind has been undergoing a process of evolution, there has been turmoil within, but most of the people around us do not know that this turmoil is internal. They attribute the causes of their unhappiness to the material world: their son is not obedient, there is not enough money, or the husband and wife are not getting on well.

In this way we attribute our internal turmoil to the external environment. In yoga, however, we come, to the point of realization that the cause of turmoil, restlessness and disturbance is internal. Therefore, instead of trying to rectify and waste our energy on the external environment, let us dive deep within ourselves. Once we know how to look within, we will know how to tackle the problems of our personalities. However, it is not merely realization of the tendencies of the mind that is yoga. It is the realization of the fundamental stuff, the mind, that is yoga. In order to comprehend the mind, the

basic stuff, it is important and necessary to be able to pause a little and look within.

Relaxation in terms of tensions

The main subject matter of yoga is the mind. The body is the dwelling house of the mind. Because the body is the carrier, the vehicle of the mind, it has also been included within the framework of yoga practices. But just by taking care of the body and neglecting the basic structure of the mind, we are forgetting the purpose of yoga.

We know about meditation and relaxation, so let us discuss them for a moment. We want to relax ourselves, but what exactly are we trying to do? Is it sufficient that we sleep at night with the aid of a few pills? Is that relaxation? If that is not relaxation, then what is relaxation? Is the mind active or passive, conscious or unconscious, progressive or retrogressive during relaxation?

To many of us who have not been exposed to the science of yoga, relaxation means a negative side of the mind. We have not been able to define relaxation in terms of tensions. If the tension is of a particular quality, then the relaxation has to be of the same quality. We cannot treat a particular disease with a medicine that is not relevant to the disease.

Tensions are threefold: there are muscular tensions, mental tensions and emotional tensions. Muscular tensions belong to the physical body, to the nervous system, to the endocrinal and metabolic imbalances, and can be properly managed by the six shatkarmas of hatha yoga.

Mental tensions are caused by excessive intellectual and mental work. You have a wife or husband, financial difficulties, a business, problems of so many types which keep the mind occupied all the time, from dawn to dusk and from dusk to dawn. Even when you are asleep, your mind is active in dreams, most of which you don't remember. These mental tensions keep the whole mental mechanism in a very difficult position.

What we require is a practice which will enable us to stop thinking altogether, no matter whether the thoughts are

necessary or unnecessary, relevant or irrelevant to our day-to-day life. We need sleep for the body and rest for the mind. We know that even in deep sleep the mind does not rest. How then does it get the rest it needs? We do not know the art of stopping the mind for a moment; we are not aware of the system. The system for stopping the mind is meditation.

Meditation is a yogic system in which the individual tries to focus his mind at one point and then drops it. The tendencies and awareness of the mind are dropped for a moment and the flow of consciousness is blocked. If you can block the flow of consciousness even for one minute, it will give you all the energy you need and rid you of tensions.

Antar mouna and yoga nidra

Emotional tensions, are caused by the love and hate affairs of life. They are due to overexpectation. Everyone knows what emotional tension is. Most of us undergo the state of inner emotional tension sometime or another in our lives. What is the way out of it? In yoga we have two systems for releasing emotional tension. One is known as *antar mouna*, inner silence, and the second is known as *yoga nidra* or psychic sleep.

Inner silence, *antar mouna*, is a practice in which you are required to observe the behaviour of the mind without any partiality or obstruction. You let the mind behave as it wants to. Let the consciousness flow. Let the memories come. Let the thoughts pass through the arena of the mind. Do not stop them. Watch them. Be an impartial spectator of the flow of consciousness. The past will come. The future will come. Worries and anxieties will pass through. You are only an observer, an impartial witness to all that is happening in the mind, without being affected by any of it.

When your mind is brooding over a thought, usually what happens is that you either become panicky or very happy. In its fantasizing, the mind sometimes reflects on the past which can be either pleasant or unpleasant. When it is pleasant, we like it, we want to dwell on it. That is attachment, that is identification. But when the thought is very unpleasant and

it is forcing itself upon us, we become panicky. We become very disturbed and restless, we don't want it. That is called repulsion.

We are either attached to a particular thought or we are repelled by it. This attraction and repulsion, this attachment to and detachment from your thought patterns should be carefully avoided during the practice of inner silence. Before meditation or religious prayers, you should practise *antar mouna* to see what is happening in your mind. Go deep and just try to be a witness. This is how the release of emotional energy takes place.

The practice of inner silence has five stages, following one after the other in a fixed sequence. Why? Because we have found in many cases that when we try to observe the mind, there is total blankness and then suddenly there is pandemonium. The moment you try to look at the mind, everything is quiet, it is blank. But as soon as you stop looking, there is pandemonium again.

This kind of blockage of consciousness has to be corrected. So, before you try to see the tendencies of your mind, there must be a preliminary practice. It's very simple. It is just to become receptive to all the sounds that are within the range of your hearing. You just listen to all of the different sounds that are around you as far as you can possibly hear them. This is the first stage of *antar mouna* and there are four more stages.

Another important technique for relaxation of emotional tension is *yoga nidra*. In the practice of *yoga nidra* you do not sleep, but you develop a dynamic consciousness through relaxation. This relaxation goes to each and every part of the body, starting with the right hand thumb and relaxing the whole area covered by the central nervous system.

We have witnessed marvellous results through *yoga nidra*. If one practices the technique once a day for half an hour, one will not only experience tranquillity, one will also develop a dynamic personality in oneself. In *yoga nidra* the resolutions we make, the decisions we take, the thoughts we create become

potentially very powerful. They go into the depths of the subconscious and even the unconscious, and in the course of time they become realities.

Perfection in life

Relaxation is not a negative state of the mind, nor is it passive. In yoga, relaxation is a dynamic state where the mind is growing in the internal field. Hatha yoga, raja yoga and yoga nidra are some of the important methods of relaxation for our day-to-day life. But apart from everything else, there is one thing that every person should not fail to realize. One may be a theist or an atheist, it doesn't matter. The important thing is that we all have a mind, and this mind is evolving; it is not a static entity.

In the animal kingdom the consciousness is evolving at a very slow rate because there is no awareness and no effort to develop, but in human beings the consciousness is evolving at a greater speed. This speed can be accelerated and the time for evolution can be shortened by the practice of yoga, particularly by the practice of dhyana yoga.

Dhyana yoga is the yoga of meditation. If all of you can just take this one thing back with you from this meeting, then my coming and your coming will bear fruit in the course of time. There is nothing priceless in life except meditation. Material things can fail you, life can fail you, anything can fail you, but not meditation.

He who spends at least ten minutes every day in the quietness of his consciousness, he who knows the technique of stepping into his own consciousness, he who is able to be aware when all the names and forms of this external existence have been wiped out and transcended – such a man is approaching the state of perfection in life. Perfection in life implies greatness of your being. If you are not perfect, you are unhappy, you are discontented. Perfection is our aim. Everybody has to try to perfect himself by devoting some time to meditation.

Beautifying the reflection

To put it another way, everything starts happening when you close your eyes. Nothing happens when you open your eyes, because then you are living in the world of the senses which is empirical and transitory. You are living in a world that is known by the mind, and what is comprehended by the mind is transitory, empirical and short-lived. But the moment you close your eyes and look within, the inner space becomes visible. When that happens, you go deep into your consciousness.

The saints and sages have told us time and time again that real life is within. What does it mean? What about this life, this drama, this existence? Is it not here? Yes, it is, but it is not the ultimate; it is not the real. It is a shadow of your inner life. What you see in a mirror is a reflection of your face. In the same manner, this external life is a reflection of your inner life.

If you are shaving yourself, you don't shave the reflection in the mirror; you have to shave your face naturally. If you want to dress yourself and comb your hair, you don't do it to the reflection; you have to dress your body and comb the hair on your head. In the same way, the external life which we experience day in and day out is a reflection of the inner life about which we have no idea. We have been totally ignorant of another dimension of our existence, and we have only been trying to beautify the mirror's reflection. We have been trying to find a panacea for the reflection and for the shadow, and we have never succeeded.

The key lies within

In spite of all that we have in our lives, we still remain unhappy. We have a wife, children, home, cars, money, bank balances, jobs, businesses and we have love, but still we are unhappy. What does it mean? Have you ever tried to think about it? Of course, there are people who don't have so many things; we can understand their unhappiness better. "I have no food; I am unhappy." "I have no money; I am unhappy."

But even if we have everything we want, we are still unhappy. This should give us a clue that the key lies elsewhere.

Meditation puts you in touch with your real being. Without meditation, it is not possible to know your real self. There is a gap between the external life and the internal life, and there has to be some vehicle or some means to traverse the gap. The gap is like a river. You bring your car up to the shore and then board a boat to go to the other shore. Meditation bridges the gap in your life. Once you are able to contact your inner consciousness, to know your inner being, to visualize the inner light, everything will be properly arranged and the external life will become a veritable happiness. Then you don't miss anything, even though you have nothing.

To conclude, relaxation is necessary, the hatha yoga practices are necessary, but the most necessary thing in life is the art of meditation. The external light is extinguished, the inner light is blossoming and spreading, and you see things inside. For the practice of meditation you need a technique, a system. Just closing the eyes does not produce meditation for everyone. Some people can go in with mantra awareness, others can go in through concentration on particular psychic centres in the body, and others through pranayama. There are not just a few techniques; there are many, and you can choose the one that suits you best.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

I suffer from many restless dreams and nightmares. What does this mean and what can I do about it?

Dreams are a natural expression and a natural outlet, but in order to make this release more effective you should practise the technique of *trataka*. Before you go to bed, have a small light or point in front of you and gaze at it for some time without winking or blinking. When you are unable to maintain steady gazing any longer, close your eyes. Try to see the counter figure of the light or point at the eyebrow centre. Keep on gazing at the counter image of the light or

point for as long as you can still see it. When it has gone, open your eyes and again gaze at the light or point. Try to be one-pointed.

Do this three or four times and then go to bed. First lie on your left side for about five minutes or so, and then turn onto the right side. While doing this, maintain awareness of the natural breathing process, the spontaneous breathing process which is happening all the time, just the awareness that you are breathing. I am breathing in, I am breathing out. I know I am breathing in, I know I am breathing out. To the breath you can add a particular word like *Om* or *Soham* or your own mantra.

If you go to sleep in this way, you will have dreams in perfect order because the release takes place in a relaxed fashion. I'll give you an example. If your stomach is constipated and you take a heavy purgative, what happens? The purging is sudden and forcible, but if you take fruit juice or lemon water, then the forced purging doesn't happen. It is relaxed. If you take neither purgatives nor fruit, what will happen? The constipated stomach will sooner or later create gas, acid, bile and so on, eventually producing diarrhoea.

Diarrhoea is also a release in the same way that purging and relaxing are a release, but which of the three is best? Relaxation of course. Now, in the same way, when you are dreaming strange things, that is the release. But in the opinion of yoga, the release or the relaxation of the suppressed principle of the mind should take place in such a way that the mind is not tormented by it later, nor disturbed during the dreams.

Is there a method of treating headaches with yoga?

Headache is not a particular disease. It could be migraine; it could be due to high blood pressure or low blood pressure; it could be due to a defect of the eyes. But generally speaking, the practice of neti, passing tepid saline water through the nasal passages, will help headache.

Do you have inner peace? What is it like?

This is good question, and the reply can only be yes. Inner peace is a balanced vision of life. It is not subject to achievements and losses. Inner peace is an understanding of everything in life. External life is a life of ups and downs, and for a weak man it sometimes becomes tiring and even exhausting. But for a strong man, every ascent is a joy and every descent is a game.

How much does the intake of drugs, alcohol or cigarettes slow down the evolution of the individual soul?

Nothing can affect the evolutionary passage of consciousness. If one is following the techniques of meditation and the mind is attaining relaxation, then one does not need these things. Drugs, alcohol and so on are needed by the individual when he is in a state of tension. When there is no tension, there is no need for them. For one who meditates, these are external things.

Personally I am not against the use of drugs and alcohol because my main idea is to be positive, not negative. If I smoke or drink, it is no use fighting my habits because they are caused by other circumstances. They may be due to faulty systems in the body, or they may be caused by endocrinal imbalances. If I practise hatha yoga, the yoga of purification, asanas, pranayama, meditation and relaxation, in the course of time, when everything has become purified, perhaps alcohol and cigarettes will not be necessary.

Can meditation increase your memory and powers of concentration?

Yes. Meditation increases memory, the power of concentration and the power of reception and reproduction. Finally, the practices of meditation evolve the mind to the point of intuition.

Can you achieve the state of inner peace within the material world, or do you need to withdraw from it somehow?

Peace has to be achieved within life and life is based on matter. There is no possibility of withdrawal from life. You maybe

able to withdraw from the external aspects, but you cannot withdraw yourself from awareness of matter. This problem has confronted the great thinkers right from the beginning.

In India it has been under discussion for the last five to ten thousand years: "Withdraw yourself and inner peace will come to you." Then what is the fun of having inner peace? Some thinkers have said, "Live in life, and think that it is inner peace." How is this possible? Peace within disturbances? This is what they have been discussing, and as a result, religions have arisen one after another.

Finally, a note was struck in the *Bhagavad Gita*: the philosophy of renunciation within action, inner peace during fulfilment of your duties. It is not possible to achieve inner peace by renunciation of all karmas. So long as the mind broods over the material pleasures which it does not experience, it is hypocritical. But if one is living life in all its fullness; meaning the senses, mind and matter, and at the same time has defined one's relationship with material life and has classified everything properly, then one knows how far one can go.

This particular yoga is the yoga of active detachment. If you work in a bank and spend the whole day counting money, how much you receive and how much you pay out doesn't affect you, no matter how many thousands of dollars it is. But if you earn one hundred and twenty dollars a week, a little more or a little less does affect you. What is personal affects you, and what is impersonal does not affect you.

Therefore, live this life. Do not withdraw from life. Fulfil your respective duties and inner peace will come to you when you accept whatever happens to you, when everything in life becomes impersonal. That is the secret.

Is peace of mind the highest level of evolution or is there something beyond it?

Peace of mind is not the ultimate state. The ultimate is to realize your real being, the Supreme Consciousness. Inner peace or happiness is only a means to an end.

Is it possible to attain peace of mind on Earth?

Where else is it possible? Not on Mars or Jupiter or anywhere else. It is only possible here. This is certain. Many people have had the vision and many more will have it, more and more.



22

Spiritual Consciousness

Melbourne University, Melbourne, Australia, 16 October 1978.

It has been many years since I visited Melbourne. I am here again for a short time on my way back to India from the Sydney Yoga Convention. Briefly, I will tell you something about myself. I am not a preacher of any sect, nor do I propagate a particular religion or philosophy. Through my association with people of different nationalities, religions and faiths all over the world, I have been asking in my own way, how is it possible for everyone to attune their consciousness with a higher state of consciousness?

During his existence, man has been living a life of imperfection and incompleteness, and this has given him an awareness of insufficiency and unhappiness. In spite of the great achievements that our civilization has made, in spite of all that we possess, we have this experience of insufficiency in our lives. If we are honest in our inquiries regarding ourselves, we will know that we have been living very incomplete lives, lives which we have been compelled to live, which have been forced on us and for which there has been no alternative.

This should be the conclusion of our honest inquiries. We seem to be very happy, full of joy and beauty and richness, but are we really? No, we are not. Unless we find the way, the purpose for our existence, we will not be able to experience the greater side of our lives, the ultimate dimension of our

consciousness. We are here this evening to think about what we have to do in order to contact the inner being, the nucleus of our existence.

Yoga and the mind

The most practical and easiest way for each and every individual to contact the substratum of their existence is through yoga. For many centuries, earlier in human history, our ancestors experimented with this great science of yoga, and they attained enlightenment. The results were a reality. Today, after a lapse of a few centuries, again we are talking about the science of yoga. Please remember that when I use the word yoga, I use it in the sense of a science that pertains to the whole concept of the mind. I do not merely mean hatha yoga, raja yoga or dhyana yoga, nor do I mean that certain psychic experiences are yoga.

In yoga we deal with the most important part of our being, the mind. It is this mind which stands as a barrier between myself and my self. It is this mind through which contact will be made between the individual self and the inner self. We do not understand the mind, nor have we been able to analyze it. Modern science has analyzed the symptoms of the mind, but these are not its definition. The elements of the mind cannot be its definition. Mind is more than schizophrenia, more than emotional breakdowns, more than happiness or unhappiness.

Our experiences in life are manifestations of the mind in relation to the environment, to conditions surrounding us, to time and space, name and form. But we have not tried to have a vision of the mind. I'm not talking about reality or about the body, I'm talking about the mind, an entity that stands between reality and the body. This mind, which is a stuff in itself, which is the homogeneity of consciousness, should be experienced first.

On one side we experience pain and pleasure and on the other side we have psychic experience, but these do not represent the whole status of the mind. When I have a tumour

in my body, the tumour does not represent the body. When I have sickness in certain parts of my body, the sickness does not represent or explain the body. In the same way, sickness of the mind or experiences of the mind do not represent or explain the mind.

In yoga, practices are given by which the homogeneous mind becomes the subject matter of experience, and once you are able to experience the mind, you are on the right road. The practice which is suggested to bring about this experience is meditation. Traditionally we call it *dhyana yoga*, the yoga of meditation. It is the royal road, the direct link, the highway, where the individual consciousness travels at a steady speed, traversing time and space and associations of the senses and sensual pleasure. Transcending all of these, he leaves behind the knowledge of space, ego, duality and multiplicity.

What is meditation?

Dhyana yoga should be studied scientifically by everyone, but it is not a matter of taking just a day or two. It takes time; everything takes time. But just because meditation takes time, it does not mean that it is not worth trying. We close our eyes; this is one of the ways to meditate, but it is not meditation. We try to focus our mind on one object within the mind; – this is a way to meditation but it is not meditation. The mind has certain experiences of lights, vibrations, lightness, flowers, gardens, oceans, beautiful sky, the sun and the moon; this is the way to meditation, but it is not meditation.

The great author of raja yoga, Sage Patanjali, is very clear in his definition of meditation. He says, “When the mind becomes free from the awareness of subjective and objective experience, it is only then that meditation has dawned.” When you are not able to visualize external objects, when you are not able to hear external sounds, when you are not able to feel tactile consciousness, when the sense objects don’t bother you anymore, then it should be understood that you are in a state of meditation.

The consciousness flows uninterrupted, visions stop, psychic experiences are no more, because the state of meditation is far from psychic experiences. You may call these experiences divine, you may call them psychic experiences, or you may call them 'the experience'. That is perfectly alright because they are all ways to meditation, but they are not meditation. In the state of meditation, the awareness of unity, non-dual unity alone takes place. All experiences belonging to the conscious mind, to the subconscious mind and to the unconscious mind come to a point of cessation. There the mind stops; the flow of empirical consciousness comes to an end.

The mind is the subject matter of yoga and meditation is the way. In the science of yoga, all the preliminary practices are intended to help the process of meditation. The purification processes of hatha yoga, the practices of pranayama, mudras and bandhas, the practices of concentration and yoga nidra are all based on perfecting meditation. When we talk about dhyana yoga, we are not trying to undervalue the practices of hatha yoga. All of you who have been practising asanas and pranayama should not feel that we are overemphasizing meditation and undervaluing the other aspects of yoga.

The asanas, the postures which most of you are aware of, are not merely physical exercises. They are the tools for awakening the physical body, to enable it to retain the experience of meditation. It is not easy to retain the experience of meditation in a body which is not prepared for it. The asanas prepare the body through the endocrine system and the nervous system to become a competent receptacle for holding the experience of dhyana yoga.

Evolution of the spirit

The experience of this day-to-day life is real, but there is another life within us which is also real. Our day-to-day life is only part of the reality. Because of personal ignorance, we have not been able to develop a vision of the inner life. We know only so much of the world; we are able to see only as much of life as can be

apprehended by the mind and the senses, by the intellect and the emotions, because we have not developed our spirit.

We have developed our physical capacities, we have grown in mind, we have developed our emotional sensibility and sensitivity, but we have only heard the word spirit; we haven't developed it. We do not have a spiritual eye. With the physical eye, we see the physical objects around us. With the spiritual eye, we are able to see the spiritual life. This spirit I am talking about is not a ghost. It is consciousness, absolute consciousness. It is homogeneous, it is formless, it is nameless, and it is cosmic. It is not subject to time and space.

In every person there is this spiritual consciousness. Animals have evolved to the physical state; man has evolved to the mental state; sages and saints have evolved far beyond the mind to the spiritual state. We ordinary people have to do something in order to develop this spiritual consciousness, and this is the subject matter for tonight's program. I'm not going to tell you how to develop the body; you can go to a gymnasium for that. I don't have to tell you how to develop the mind; you can go to school and learn things. I don't have to tell you how to develop your emotions; there are plenty of ways in life whereby you can train, tune, prune, modify and kill your emotions, if you like. I don't have to teach you that. But I should tell you about something which you have heard from time to time and read about in books, but which we have no experience of – the spiritual consciousness.

This spiritual consciousness is also known in yoga as *atma*. It is not a ghost. It is a flow, a cosmic flow. When the spiritual consciousness develops, one becomes the experiencer of the inner life of which this outer life is a reflection, a manifestation, a duplicate copy. This is not the real life; it is something like your reflection in a mirror. You don't care about your real self; you only care about the reflection. You want to improve the reflection, but how can you do so without improving your self?

This is a clue. Once you are able to mend your spiritual life, the outer life will become a perennial source of joy. If you

merely do the patchwork, if you merely try to avoid the causes of unhappiness in your present life by tackling them directly on the field of the mind and senses, then you are going to fail. You have failed and you will fail; I don't know of anyone who has succeeded. Millions and millions of people all over the world are still unhappy in spite of the best solutions the world has to offer. They commit suicide; they throw their lives away. Why? Because they are trying to fix up the reflection; they are not trying to mend the reality. They have not yet had a vision of the reality.

Make the mind free

Unless we are in a position to develop the spiritual consciousness within us, unless we know what the spirit is, unless evolution of the spirit takes place, there is no hope for mankind to be delivered from unhappiness and torture. The only way is to grow, to develop the mind is through meditation. When the mind becomes free, we have found the way. When the mind becomes free from identification, conditioning and ignorance, it becomes spirit. The spirit is hidden, as though it was wearing a cloak. Like a coconut which has the kernel inside a shell, in the same way the spirit is contained in the depths of the mind.

In order to know the spirit, to see the spirit, to develop spiritual consciousness, it is not necessary to imagine anything. You have to do just one thing – make your mind free from associations, free from the three gunas, rajas, tamas and sattwa. By and by, in the course of time, the mind will lose its scales. Like a snake throws away its skin, the mind throws away the scales it has collected during its incarnations and its associations with life.

One fine day, during meditation, the mind is no longer the mind. The cloak has been thrown off, the scales have been abandoned and the spirit shines in its pristine glory. The spirit is contained by the cloak of the mind. The mind is contained by the cloak of the body. Therefore, we have to transcend the notion of body first, the notion of mind next,

and what remains is the atman, the spiritual consciousness. So, go on with your yoga practices with one sole aim, realization of the spiritual consciousness in its pristine glory, complete within itself.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

In an interview published in Australia, you said that the mind can create matter. Can you be more explicit on this subject?

For most of us, the mind is a thinking vehicle, a tool for the thinking process, but in yoga, mind is more than that. When the mind is in a state of dissipation, it creates problems for itself. When the mind is in a state of unhappiness, it creates a disaster for itself. But when the same mind is tamed through the practice of yoga, it becomes a creator, a solid creator. Even as it created problems and disasters in its dissipated state, it can create matter, objects and things in this higher state.

In yoga, the mind is not only a tool for thinking, it is homogeneous consciousness. When you take matter and disintegrate it, finally nuclear energy is produced. In the same way, when the mind is purified through the act of meditation, and when all that remains is the mind and not the worldly desires and associations, then the mind becomes potential *shakti*, potential power. That is how the mind becomes creative.

I find that yoga practices and spiritual development have increased my already high level of sensitivity. Unfortunately I find it even more difficult to get above the personality level. How can I retain my sensitivity and not feel things so personally?

While you are going through the experiences of yoga in your spiritual life, there are stages when you becomes very sensitive, but if you have a guru who can give you spiritual advice from time to time, and if you retire now and then from your active life, you will be able to maintain a balance between the two.

Does each individual have one personal mantra only? Would different gurus give the same mantra to a particular person?

This is a small question, but it is a subject by itself. The subject of mantra is very interesting and I am not able to tell you all about it now. You must stick to your mantra. There is no use in flirting with so many mantras. Mantra is not only the name of a God or deity, it is an energy principle of sound. If you have a personal mantra, stick to it. Even if it doesn't bear fruit immediately, it will do its job in the course of time.

Mantra never fails. Maybe some people expect a little more than they should; they want very quick results, just like instant coffee. Mantra works slowly; its penetration is gradual, not sudden. You must continue with your personal mantra with conviction, application and sincerity, even if it does not succeed for some period of time. If your mantra does not bring results even in a year or two, don't be disheartened or discouraged. Even if it takes a few more years for the mantra to do its job, it's worth it. Do not change your mantra. This is my humble but firm advice to all of you.

How is kriya yoga different from the others? Is it possible for us to practise kriya yoga in the West?

In our age of complex situations, kriya yoga is one of the most powerful systems for the awakening of the spiritual potential or the awakening of the kundalini. When I say spiritual potential, I mean kundalini. There are many practices and all the techniques have their own place, but the practices of kriya yoga are far superior, far better planned, and they are easily accessible to the people of our age.

The practices of kriya yoga fulfil the most important need of man. That need is to awaken the kundalini in a natural way. There are so many ways for the awakening of kundalini. There are tantric ways, but they are not all respectable ways. They may be taboo in this society; they may not be acceptable or appreciated. The practices of kriya yoga will go a long way towards awakening the spiritual consciousness.

Why is it that we cannot sincerely accept responsibility and that we must wait for the inevitable disaster, or someone to strike us down? Can a prisoner or a criminal repent of the crime that he is not even aware of having committed?

Man is groping in darkness. There are many things which we do not know and even if we are trying to know the secrets of life, we are using the most incapable tool we have – the mind. Our mind is not purified, it is a sick mind. And with this sick mind we are trying to dive deep into reality. What is karma, what is destiny and what is fate? What relationship do they have in our day-to-day actions? How do the karmas follow the consequences? How far do they go? Do they go beyond this life? If so, does life continue? If that be true, then how?

These are the question which we have been tackling with our sick mind, and that is why we do not get a true reply. You may or may not agree when I say there is no doubt that karma is true and tangible, like a seed. Unless a seed has been cooked, it has the potential of growth. The seed may remain in the packet for a year or two, but as soon as it is put in touch with water, soil, sun and air, it will start to grow.

Karmas are threefold. Those which have not started to mature are in the seed state. Second, the karmas which you perform today are shaping themselves and will soon become seeds, but they are not seeds yet. Third, there are the karmas which have now started maturing, those which have just come to the point of growth. These are the three forms of karma.

The third form is the fate and destiny. It has been maturing in the form of consequences such as sufferings, happiness, games, loves, crimes, jails, murder, punishment, and this and that. The second karma is the current karma, the day-to-day activity, the day-to-day life which we are not very careful nor very sensitive about. The first kind of karma is in the seed state; it is just there.

Of the three, it is the third one which we are most aware of, the fate and the destiny. But the first two kinds of karma can be balanced by consciously following a diligent, honest and sincere spiritual life.

What is it that keeps our divine consciousness suppressed?

Nothing keeps the divine consciousness suppressed. We just don't want to see it, that's all. It is like the ostrich which buries its head in the sand when someone approaches. In the same manner, the divine effulgence is self-existing, self-shining – even now it is within me; it is the controller of all that is taking place in my life, but I'm so engrossed in my own pranks, in my own toys, in my own maya, that although the divine presence is there, I don't feel it.

What is the difference between the psychic experience, which you seemed to dismiss, and spiritual consciousness?

I did not dismiss psychic experiences. I said that they are ways to meditation. Psychic experiences of different dimensions, light, colour and so forth, are ways to meditation, but they are not meditation.

According to yoga, psychic experiences belong to the fourth body. The first body is the physical body, second is the pranic body, third is the mental body, fourth is the psychic body and fifth is the homogeneous body. When the consciousness evolves through the previous three bodies, and passes through the fourth one, then the psychic experiences begin to take place.

To explain this in another way, when the kundalini in mooladhara chakra gets the kick of yoga, it just awakens. When the awakening of kundalini begins to take place, then psychic experiences of various depths also begin to take place.

In what way is meditation different from what seems like a similar state of training through self-hypnosis?

I have been a student and also a teacher of hypnosis for quite some time in my life. I did very good work through the processes of hypnotherapy and even today I can put animals under hypnosis, even dogs.

Hypnosis is a state wherein the spiritual consciousness is not developed. It belongs to the state of mental consciousness

and has nothing to do with the spiritual consciousness. Whereas meditation has nothing to do with the lower states; it belongs to the state of spiritual consciousness. When you are dealing with the mind, it is hypnosis, and when you are dealing with the spirit, it is meditation.

In hypnosis you withdraw the mental consciousness and the mind undergoes a state of rigor mortis. There is no expansion of mind, but there is a lot of drama. In meditation it is just the opposite; there is no withdrawal, there is expansion of consciousness. The consciousness which was subject to time, space and object expands itself beyond the borders of the mind, beyond the frontiers of name and form, time and space, and it becomes wider and greater.

In hypnosis the inner consciousness does not become effulgent. In meditation the inner consciousness is full, complete and homogeneous. It is total. In hypnosis the process of knowledge comes to a point of cessation. In meditation the process of knowledge begins. A person who comes out of hypnosis is a subject. A person who comes out of meditation is not a subject, he is a guru, a master, and that is the fundamental difference.

When you come out of hypnosis, you are not even a chela; your qualities are dormant, you are a suppressed human being. You cannot do anything with conviction and faith and confidence. Unless your operator tells you to do a thing, you can't do it. You are an undeveloped personality when you come out of hypnosis. Hypnosis can also be responsible for mental retardation.

However, when you practise meditation, your soul becomes effulgent, your consciousness expands, you develop confidence, you can follow your convictions. You become a master of the processes of the mind, master of the process of control, master of the situations of your life, and you make proper decisions which you decide for yourself, not which are decided for you by someone else. Even your guru becomes a second entity, because you become the guru of your own self.

It has been said that the way of yoga is for those people who are introverted, and the way of tantra is for extroverts, those people who will play out their wants and desires and reach a point of acceptance. Is this correct? Can you say something about the comparison between the ways of yoga and tantra?

Your information is not correct. Tantra and yoga are not two different philosophies. I don't know what you mean by tantra, but I definitely know what tantra is. Yoga is the practical aspect and tantra is the philosophical, theoretical aspect. Tantra is the theory; yoga is the practice. What tantra tells us, yoga asks us to practise.

Tantra is a combination of two ideas. The word *tantra* is a Sanskrit term in two parts: first, expansion of mind and second, liberation of energy. Let me not use the word 'liberation', let it be 'release'. A philosophy or a system which teaches how to expand the mind-consciousness and thereby how to release the energy or the shakti is tantra.

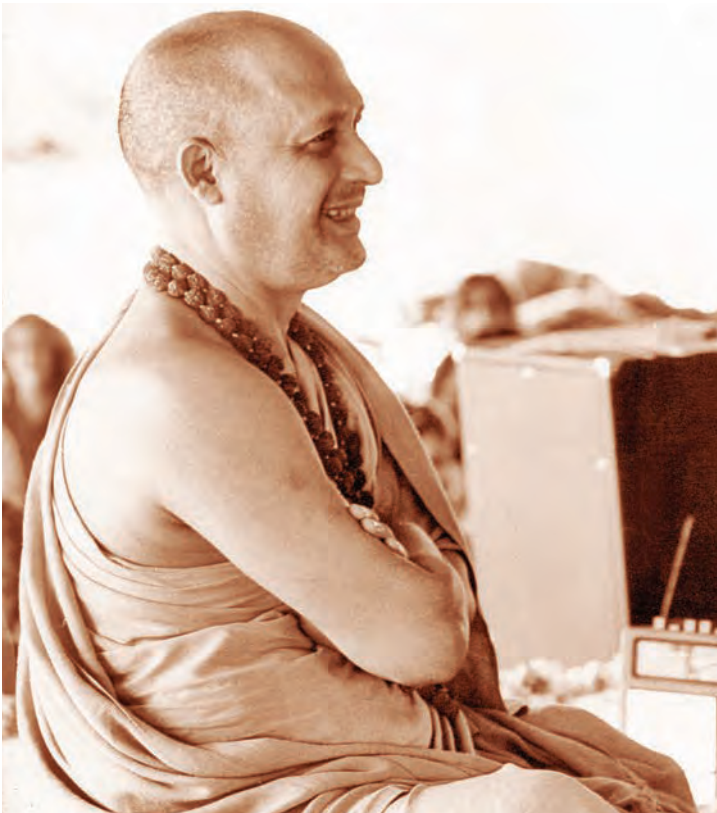
Tantra is not just a science which includes the five elements, or *pancha makara*, popular today in Western countries: wine, meat, fish grain and sexual intercourse. These five elements do not represent the exact definition of tantra.

In brief, tantra is the oldest human discovery. More than 45,000 years ago tantra was very prevalent. From tantra came the vedic scriptures, the *Rig Veda* and all the four Vedas, then came the yoga practices. If you read the original books on tantra, you will find all the information on kriya, asana, pranayama, mudras and bandhas, mantra and yoga nidra, hatha yoga, meditation, kundalini and the chakras. All that you have been hearing about in the science of yoga is in tantra.

However, in tantra there is one additional thing. Whereas all the religions talk about celibacy, tantra says that for those who can abstain, well and good, but for those who can't there is a way. That is the fundamental difference between tantra and other systems of spiritual consciousness. Tantra does not tell you to indulge in sex and awaken your power. No. It says

that if you want to lead that life, then it's no barrier, but it does not require you to do it.

Tantra does not support your alcoholic habits; it does not support your non-vegetarian diet; it does not support your permissive life. But if you are doing these things, you can keep on with them; it does not matter. This is the only fundamental difference. Tantra and yoga should be viewed as one and the same science, not as two sciences. The different books you have read on yoga have all been reproduced from tantric books. All that I have written has been reproduced from the tantric texts.



23

How to Progress in Yoga

Melbourne Ashram, Melbourne, Australia, 17 October 1978.

It is not necessary to do much yoga, however the same practices have to be done for a long period of time. It seems to be a very monotonous affair. The same *Om Namah Shivaya* is practised throughout the day and night for weeks, for months, for years, for life. Therefore, I sometimes have great difficulty in finding out what I should speak about on yoga. Should it be theory or practice?

The theory we have invented and the practice is very simple. It starts with the mind, with the same mind which thinks, which worries, which is a riddle of life, which plays a lot of mental pranks. This mind has to be utilized for the practice of yoga, a bad servant to be utilized for such a good cause. First of all, therefore, it is necessary for us to change the nature of the servant. If you have a business and your assistant, your helper, your subordinate, has the habit of stealing, you would not put him in charge of the cash department.

The mind is full of latent impressions of karma, of maya, that have accumulated during the process of evolution from the animal incarnation. The habits of the mind are such that we have to deal with this entity, the mind, first. How can we sit for concentration and meditation with a vagrant wandering mind? Just as when you deal with the problems of

children, you first define what the problems are. In the same way, in order to deal with the problems of the mind, first we have to classify them. The great spiritual seers have come to the conclusion that the problems of the mind are threefold: impurity, dissipation and ignorance or unawareness. Unless the mind has evolved to the state of *sattwa*, everyone's mind is suffering from these threefold faults.

Purification of the mind

We have to deal with these threefold problems of the mind by a systematic approach to yoga sadhana. *Karma yoga*, the yoga of selfless action, is important for the purification of the mind. You cannot purify the mind unless it is rid of its toxic matter. The toxic matter of the body is released by naturopathy, by natural methods, by purging or fasting. The mental body has to be purified by the incessant practice of *karma yoga*.

Selfless action in itself is yoga. If you have understood yoga and spiritual life to be sitting in the lotus posture with the eyes closed, then you have misunderstood yoga and spiritual life. If you think that the actions and activities of life do not contribute to the growth of spiritual consciousness, then you are making a great blunder. Man cannot evolve without action. Man cannot overcome his faults without action.

Man's evolution and man's downfall are caused by karma. When karma is done with selflessness, not for yourself, nor for myself, but for others, then it does not beget any seed or consequence. The results of selfless karma are sterile; they do not generate another karma because the personal ego and attachment are not involved in the action. Where will unhappiness come from? Where will pain be generated? This selfless action is an important form of yoga for the purification of the mind, because you are releasing karmic forces which otherwise would take you to the mental hospital, or would cause mental depression or other psychological problems.

There exists what is known as mental energy, and this mental energy is backed by the karmic forces. For example, what will happen if a man is constipated and he still keeps

on eating? He will need some outlet for it. It may be through vomiting, purging, diarrhoea or dysentery. Then he may take some medicine from the doctor to help cure the diarrhoea, and that gives him a headache. So he takes some aspirin. Then he has another pain here, so he takes another kind of medicine. Then he gets a backache, and so on.

You see, the toxin is travelling through the body. If you do shankhaprakshalana, the cleaning of the alimentary canal with saline water, then there will be no vomiting, no diarrhoea, no headache, no pain in the chest, no acidity, no gastric ulcer, or peptic ulcer, or duodenal ulcer, or any kind of disease. The toxic substances in the system need an outlet, either natural or unnatural.

In the same way, the mental energy needs a natural outlet, and that natural outlet is karma. When karma is done for a selfish purpose, it is an outlet. When it is done with selfless motives, it is also an outlet. Both karma with self-intent and karma with selflessness are outlets, but there is a difference. The karma with selfless motives does not generate further karma, while the karma with selfish motives keeps generating and regenerating further karma. Further toxins come back to the individual.

So, one of the problems of the mind is impurity, and this has to be eliminated by the practice of karma yoga at the outset, before we take up the practices of kundalini yoga, laya yoga, dhyana yoga or any higher yoga. Otherwise, during meditation this energy causes hallucinations and illusions. This is a fact.

Dealing with dissipation

The second problem of the mind is dissipation. The mind is never steady. It is restless by nature, like a monkey. When a monkey is stung by a scorpion, it becomes all the more restless. This is the nature of the mind. It is always moving, never static. It is not able to hold itself still or fix itself at one point.

Even if I were to give you concentration by touching your forehead for a moment, afterwards your mind would revolt

again because activity is the natural formation and structure of the mind. The mind is made up of three elements: *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*; these are the three qualities of nature: equilibrium, activity and immobility respectively. These are the three eternal qualities of which the mind is composed.

To create a state of spontaneous concentration, bhakti yoga should be practised. According to the great gurus of the past, the mind spontaneously becomes one-pointed by the practice of bhakti yoga, in the form of kirtan, satsang, and reading the lives of the great saints. Without adding bhakti yoga as an element of your spiritual sadhana, dissipation of the mind cannot be stopped.

The veil of ignorance

The third problem of the mind is ignorance or unawareness of the principles of consciousness, *chit*. There are true principles which we do not know because our parents did not teach them to us, and they did not teach us because they did not know themselves. Ignorance of the truth, of the true principle of life, is called *avidya*. This veil of ignorance can be removed by the practice of *jnana yoga*, the yoga of philosophical rationality.

Questions like, why am I doing all this? What for? What is this body? What is the mind? What is the spirit? How is all this related to time and space? What is time in relation to the mind? What happens when I go to sleep? Who is there? Who witnesses the sleep? What happens in dreams? Why do I dream? Who is the witness of the dream? Am I the same person who is waking and sleeping and dreaming, or am I three different beings? Am I three different personalities? If I am, then who is it that dreams, who is it that sleeps and who is it that is awake now?

These and many other questions come into our minds and we have to come to a conclusion on the basis of the dictums of the great saints and philosophers. That is *jnana yoga* – I am a part of the cosmic nature. That is the first truth which we have to know and believe, and keep in our minds. This body is not the ultimate substance; it is a reflection of some

other truth. The knowledge of time in relation to this mind is a finite concept. The awareness of time and space through this mind is a finite concept, not an infinite concept. Therefore, it is not absolute, and when it is not absolute, it cannot be truth. That which is truth must be absolute. This is jnana yoga.

In jnana yoga we come to the principle of truth, we know what it is, on the evidence of the saints, the revelations and the dictums of the great philosophers who said, “I am That”. That becomes the guideline, *Aham Brahmasmi*, “I am the cosmic light.” The saints have said, “Realize your real nature,” which means that behind the shadow of the body and the mind, behind the passions and emotions, behind the ever changing experiences, there is an eternal consciousness within us which has homogeneity at its root and which is just cosmic, without beginning and without end. The experience is an absolute experience which has no other dimensions of experience.

Adding the basic ingredients

It is necessary for a spiritual aspirant to equip himself with karma yoga, bhakti yoga and jnana yoga, and along with these three, raja yoga. Why does raja yoga not succeed? Why does it not bring the desired results? In spite of all our honest and sincere practices, we do not seem to have gone anywhere; we may even have gone backwards a little. We are where we were. Why? Is it because the system of raja yoga is incomplete?

What we have done is something like prepared a nice dinner and placed it on the table, but forgotten to add the necessary ingredients to make it tasty. In our ashram life we have added karma yoga as the most important ingredient. Many aspirants who come to our ashram are surprised and they say, “Hey, we came for meditation and all we do here is work!”

What can I say to people who are not wise enough to know the glory of karma yoga as the outlet of energy in man? Karma is not just physical mobility; it is mental and emotional mobility. The energy is moving whether you work

in the garden, kitchen, office, building or carpentry section, or cleaning the toilet. Wherever you work, it is not just the physical body which is working.

In India, monasteries are not called monasteries, they are called ashrams. The root of the word ashram is *shram*, which is a Sanskrit word meaning effort. Ashram is a place where you make a twofold effort: first is the work in the ashram – the physical labour in the kitchen, in construction, in the press, the bank, the post office and so on; second is the spiritual effort which you make.

Therefore, an *ashram* is a place where you make physical and spiritual effort. We have made it a compulsory rule that everyone who comes to an ashram to live, no matter how great a scholar, how rich or intellectual he may be, he has to participate in the activities of ashram life in order to evolve, in order to make himself competent for raja yoga.

For years together, when I was living with my guru, Swami Sivananda Saraswati, in Rishikesh, I sometimes thought that if I had to work like I did, it would be better if I went back to my family and worked there. Because I was not working like a man; I was working like a bull, like a donkey. And eventually I think that work became my passion, my second nature. Sometimes for weeks I had no time to think, I just worked.

Once I asked Swami Sivananda, “Why should we work so hard in the ashram when we have renounced everything?” He said, “Have you renounced karma? If you have renounced, then do not go to the toilet because that is karma. Do not eat because that is also karma. Do not talk because talking is karma. Do not desire because desiring is also karma.” I said, “Hey, that is very difficult.”

If the renunciation of karma is such a difficult task, why try to renounce it? Adopt it. This is what is written in the *Bhagavad Gita*. It says, “There is not a moment in life when man can remain without action.” As long as he remains alive, man must act. The nature of his mind will compel him, his desires will compel him to act. If his desires, passions and ambitions are not able to compel him to act, he will become slow, lethargic

and dull. Desire, passion and ambition stimulate karma; they are the fuels for karma.

So karma yoga, bhakti yoga and jnana yoga should be practised simultaneously in our day-to-day life. Side by side, we should practise asanas, pranayama, mudra, bandha, kriya, and whatever else we practise. Then we will not be able to say, "I have been practising raja yoga for six years and nothing is happening. I am not progressing. I seem to be at the same point."

You will be able to say, "My practice is going very well. Every day I feel something; I have some new experience or insight about truth and about life." You will be satisfied. The three conditions of the mind, impurity, dissipation and ignorance, should be removed first, and then raja yoga will become constructive. Raja yoga will become a fulfilment. Raja yoga will become the truth in your life.



24

Meditation and Inner Knowledge

Hobart College of Advanced Education, Hobart, Tasmania, 20 October 1978.

I am visiting this beautiful city for the first time on my way back from Sydney to India. I shall briefly tell you a little about myself. I don't preach a religion; I don't talk about a particular sect or creed. The only thing I speak about is man's real nature, and this is what humanity has been seeking from time immemorial.

Throughout history man has only been able to discover the physical dimension of his being. With all the intellectual concepts he has, with all the philosophical guidance he has received from the past, he has not been able to remove the veil. There is something like a veil, a barrier to the inner life. We know about it, but cannot see the inner awareness which is the fundamental basis of all the activities, of all the perceptions and of all the experiences.

Is this not a type of blindness? We see the reflection, but we are not able to see what causes the reflection. It is here that man has been making blunder after blunder in his great adventure of triumph over the pain, the agony, and disappointments and the tragedies of his life. What has man not done to overcome his sorrow and incompleteness? He has spanned oceans and skies, discovered land after land, founded religion after religion, built temple after temple, yet he has not been able to accomplish anything so far.

Man is still at the same place where his ancestors were hundreds of centuries ago. The same problem pricks man's consciousness today as pricked the consciousness of his forefathers. Where has man moved? Nowhere. It is not because man has not been sincere in his efforts. It is not because he has not made intelligent and honest efforts. But whatever he has done has always been limited to the external dimension of his consciousness, which is not real or true but is just a reflection of the internal dimension.

Just as a man trying to shave the shabby beard off his reflection in a mirror will not succeed, we have been trying to annihilate pain from that which is not real, to remove unhappiness from that which is not infinite. It is in this context that yoga comes with a definite solution which cannot be questioned – a solution which accepts all challenges.

The state of meditation

The problem is the mind. We have to tackle the mind, but we have never thought about it. In general, we know the symptoms of the mind; what we know about the mind are the manifestations of the mind, not the mind itself. Therefore, in yoga we have to visualize the mind and its wholeness. Emotion, passion, anger, jealousy, hatred, happiness, compassion, love and so forth are functions of the mind. They are the *vrittis*, the modifications of the mind, and not the mind. Mind is not a static substance, it is a dynamic substance subject to evolution. It can be comprehended through the practices of *dhyana yoga*, the yoga of meditation.

Meditation is a vast subject and it will not be possible for me to do justice to it. It is not just closing the eyes and forgetting all about oneself. Meditation is not a state of becoming unconscious; it is not a process of withdrawal of consciousness. Meditation is a process in which expansion of the mind, of the consciousness, takes place inwardly. When expansion takes place externally, the awareness of name and form, time and space is known to us. But when you turn inward and you remain aware of all that is happening within you, then real meditation takes place.

Sage Patanjali, the original authority on yoga, describes meditation as that state when the mind transcends the senses – objective awareness. When the mind transcends name and form, then meditation has already taken place.

When you close your eyes and experiences begin to happen, psychic experiences begin to take place, that is the way to meditation and not meditation itself. When you chant a name of God and your mind becomes one with the name, when the name, the sound, the mantra are transformed into subtle psychic experiences and you feel sensations at the root of the spinal cord, or at the top of your head, or in the middle of your forehead, that is the way to meditation and not meditation itself.

There is only one definition of meditation. When the consciousness becomes constant, when it is not intercepted by any other form of consciousness or awareness, when the meditator becomes unaware of his egotistical existence, when he has transcended the triple functions: the meditator, the meditation, and the object, then meditation has taken place. When the consciousness becomes constant, the flow becomes unbroken, when there is just one form of consciousness and the self is experiencing the self without any difference or distinction, that is the state of meditation. That is the classical definition of *dhyana*, meditation, in the yogic scriptures.

Spiritual experience

In modern times we have been led to believe that meditation is a series of experiences. We have been led to believe that every meditator has his own experience. However, the classical system of yoga differs from this unclassical definition. There should be only one experience which is the offspring of yoga. No matter which technique is used, whichever path you take, whichever kriya you practise, the ultimate experience is one and not two.

It cannot be a different experience for me and a different experience for you. Difference belongs to the plane of duality.

Differences belong to the dimension of name and form. Until and unless you have transcended the very existence of the mind, you will not have that one experience. And what is this one experience? It is the experience of the inner life, the real life, the life which is infinite, which is eternal. I'm not speaking about religion here; I'm speaking about something which I know, and which you will know.

Outside and inside are the two realms of human experience. When you experience knowledge through the senses and through the mind, that is external experience. When you experience something without the help of the senses, without the help of the mind, without the help of objective knowledge, then that is called inner knowledge. I repeat, when knowledge is derived through the senses and the mind and objective sources, it is external knowledge. When the knowledge comes without the help of the mind, without the help of the senses and without any previous information, then it is inner knowledge.

The inner knowledge is not a compilation of facts from books. It is an experience, and this experience is the inner life, and this inner life is the basis for the outer life we are living now. My existence, your existence and the existence of the whole world has a basis. This basis is within us, behind the mind. When meditation is achieved, we become aware of the inner life. That is when the spiritual consciousness takes birth.

The physical body took birth when we came from our mother. The mental body took birth when we overcame the animal clutches. When does the birth of the spirit take place? It takes place when meditation becomes established, when dhyana becomes established. You may have the concept of spirit, you may know a lot about it, you may have read book after book, scripture after scripture, volume after volume, but the spirit cannot be known or experienced until and unless we have become steady in our meditation.

This spiritual consciousness is the ultimate purpose of our existence. With the emergence of the spiritual consciousness,

pains, limitations of life, unsteadiness of mind, psychological, physiological, biological, emotional problems all just disappear and we become full of *anandam*, eternal bliss. This is the precise message which I take from nation to nation, from city to city, not only in India, but everywhere.

I have found that people with their own faith, with their own religion are searching for a way, and they are not able to find it, or they find something that is not correct. This is the time when all of us must experiment with something new and our experiments should lead us to the practices of yoga, where the external and spiritual lives meet at a particular point.

Meditation is not a very difficult thing. If you care to devote just ten minutes every day and bring your mind to one point of focus by any technique which you wish to adopt, then the evolution of consciousness is bound to take place. It may take you a few months or a few years, but don't worry about it. The evolution of spiritual consciousness is not a matter of a day or a year; it is a lifetime experience. If we have been able to evolve our consciousness from matter to spirit in this life, we have fulfilled our promises and we have achieved our aim.

Adventure into the unknown

You must remember that dhyana yoga, meditation, is not a joke. We tend to think that if we close our eyes, psychic experiences begin to take place and that is all there is to it; meditation has taken place. But I can tell you, all psychic experiences are unreal. They are not the ultimate. They misguide our consciousness and our soul. They make us forget our real path. Whatever may be the depth or gravity or destiny of the psychic experience, do not become involved in it, do not seek it out. No. Every psychic experience you have is not the ultimate, infinite, true and immortal experience. It will pass away and you may not have it anymore.

Therefore, let us not crave after psychic experiences. Some disciples of yoga say to me when I meet them, "Swamiji, I

have been meditating for the last three years. In the first few months I had so many divine experiences, and now I don't have anything." My reply to those sincere souls is, "You are now on the right path." But they don't seem to understand.

Other aspirants tell me that they are practising a particular system of meditation and every day they have fantastic experiences, colossal and cosmic experiences, explosions. Do you know what I tell them? I say "No. Practise bhakti yoga, the yoga of devotion; practise hatha yoga, the yoga of purification of the physical body and organs; practise karma yoga, the yoga of selfless action. Only then can you go ahead with your meditation in full swing and with double spirit." However, I ask you all to listen carefully to what I have to say. Just because you are having psychic experiences does not mean you are anywhere high on the ladder of spiritual life.

These psychic experiences and visions only indicate that your subconscious mind is undergoing a state of purging, a process of release. When man's subconscious mind, man's unseen mind, man's deeper consciousness is overloaded with tensions, conflicts, suppressions and unsaid agonies, then in dreams and in the practice of meditation he has fantastic fantasies. They are all subconscious purging. In no way do they indicate improvement, evolution or progress in meditation.

The more you succeed in meditation, the greater quietness pervades the entire personality. The mind, the thoughts, the emotions, the body, the psyche, the subconscious and the unconscious, all become calm and still. As the blue sky appears after a storm, without thunder, without cloud, without anything, that is the state of meditation. Our civilization, our world, is ready to take off on this age-old adventure, the adventure into the unknown, man's adventure into himself. Through experience we will know what is the true life and what lies within us beyond the frontiers of non-knowledge. Yoga comes to us as a personal way to spiritual evolution, and we have to approach it very intelligently and with great faith.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the use of yantra, because it seems to create visions in the mind?

Yantra is a vehicle which explodes the rigid and inflexible unconscious in our personality. Before you experience the clear vision of yourself, all that lies in your karma, all that lies in the mind suppressed by duality, all that lies dormant should be released. For that purpose there are many systems in yoga, and one of them is the use of yantra. Yantra stimulates that part of your consciousness which is the storehouse of experiences, the lower experiences. Yantra stimulates the storehouse of karma, which is mental and sensory knowledge.

Can yoga be the same in the West and the East?

Yes, certainly. I don't know which is East and which is West. When you go west, something else becomes east. Seen from India, Europe is the West. When you go to Europe, America is the West. So this is a faulty, defective definition. Let us rather say, "a culture which is primarily materialistic", or "a culture which is primarily religious and spiritual"; the Occident and the Orient. It is always possible for yoga to be the same in the Occident as in the Orient. In the same way that the Occident was able to adopt a particular system of faith and belief nineteen centuries ago, it can accept yoga.

Could you comment on marriage where one partner is married to yoga and the other lacks interest?

I have very little experience of marriage, in fact, I have no experience of it. Without personal experience I won't be able to say anything with authority, but from what I see all around me I think that marriage lacks a very important item; a very important clause has been deleted, the purpose of marriage. Is progeny the purpose of marriage? Is pleasure the purpose of marriage? Is companionship the purpose of marriage? What is the purpose of marriage in the laws of nature and the spiritual laws?

If one partner is aware of the purpose and the other is not, or if both partners are aware, then marriage is part of spiritual evolution. It is an aid to spiritual enlightenment or spiritual discovery of the soul. But if the purpose of marriage is progeny, pleasure or companionship, then I don't think the marriage will succeed or that it will become a source of perpetual happiness.

We have to redraft the whole constitution of marriage, whether it is within Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism or any other religion. We have to bring an absolutely new dimension, new approach, new philosophy and new interpretation to marriage and the union between a man and a woman. This is what I think, based on my observations over the last forty-five to fifty years, but I don't say it with authority.

Are the different forms of yoga (bhakti yoga, raja yoga, hatha yoga) of equal value in spiritual development?

Yes. Through raja yoga you can develop the mind and transcend the mind. Through hatha yoga you can purify the body and the nervous system, and create an endocrine, nervous and psychic balance within the framework of the physical body. Through bhakti yoga you can channel your emotions towards sublimation. Through karma yoga you can express your energy and thereby experience a release.

Bhakti yoga can be practised by having faith and devotion for God in any form, through your guru, through the practice of mantra, by singing the name of God, by praying to Him from the depths of your being, by associating with saints and sages, by hearing of the great glory of God and his devotees, by visiting places of pilgrimage which are sanctified by the saints and which are known to be famous for a divine presence. This is bhakti yoga.

Raja yoga is the yoga in which the mind is comprehended, the senses are brought under control and the hidden spirit in man is visualized as a cosmic entity. So karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga and hatha yoga are all aids to the whole

spiritual life. If you practise only one of them, you will have a lot of difficulties, unless you have already transcended the lower life.

However, for the average person karma yoga should form the larger part of yoga, whether one is a monk or a householder. Karma yoga is the path of selfless service and it is the most important aspect of yoga in one's life. One must work physically, one must work hard for hours together, eight hours, ten hours, twelve hours every day.

Please comment on yoga and healing. Do you have a medical unit?

In some of the countries of the world like America, France, India and Japan, research has been conducted on the effects of yoga on various diseases. Yoga has been proved to be successful in cases of hypertension and blood pressure. Some of the research has shown that yoga asanas and the practice of relaxation are an effective system of management in coronary disease, myocardial infarction and angina pectoris. For the last fifteen years we have been working on diabetes and on diseases caused by allergies, like asthma. Both have been found to respond very well to yogic treatment. We have also had great success with mental problems like insomnia and schizophrenia.

Work has been done on the effects of meditation on the different patterns of the brain in Japan and in America. I am involved with one experiment being done at the University of Barcelona, Spain, on the influence of sound on the brainwave patterns. Take for instance, the sound *Aummm*. The brainwave patterns have shown that when the *Au* part is chanted, alpha rhythms become prominent, and when the last portion, *mmm*, is chanted, theta waves become prominent.

We have not completed the research and we are not able to give a scientific interpretation of why it happens, but from this we concluded that mantras have a definite influence which can be measured and registered by modern scientific instruments.

We have also done some research on the pineal gland. What is the effect of concentration, physical concentration, physical gazing at the mid-eyebrow centre? Gazing at the eyebrow centre is known as shambhavi mudra in kriya yoga, raja yoga and hatha yoga. Shambhavi mudra is considered to be a very important practice in all yogas. Its effect is immediately transferred to the pineal body and brings about extra activities of the pineal body.

The pineal body is subject to decay. When it begins to decay at about the age of seven to ten years, then the sexual hormones are released; the lock is opened. As long as the pineal body is intact and healthy, the sexual hormones are under lock and key, and emotional balance exists. The influence of shambhavi mudra on the health of the pineal body and the effects of pineal degeneration on emotional balance and imbalance has also been studied.

A lot of work is being done in all aspects of yoga, and we have come to the conclusion that sooner or later we may be able to say with certainty, backed by clinical data, that yoga can cure many ailments, particularly the psychosomatic ailments like migraine, insomnia, hypertension, diabetes and asthma.

What states of mind can be reached by fasting?

Fasting is an aid to meditation. It purifies the physical body and makes it free from toxins. It makes the nervous system steady and it conserves the heat within the self. If fasting is correctly carried out, then it can also influence the structure of kundalini at mooladhara chakra, at the perineum or cervix.

Could you explain why yoga does not address itself to social issues, but is directed instead to individuals?

Individuals make the society. If we just make yoga a social philosophy, then it becomes an institution, an organization, as many religions have become. But, if we restrict yoga to the individual person, then the person will evolve, and if thousands of persons all over the world undergo the experience of evolution, then the whole community will

definitely be influenced by yoga. So we can say that yoga influences the social structure by helping the evolution of the individual. There are two ways of looking at the situation: one – first make a society, and the society influences the individuals; two – train the individual, and the individuals make up the society. I prefer the latter.



25

Under the Shelter of the Big Tree

Interview with The Feral Gazette, Hobart, Tasmania 21 October 1978. Interviewer: Lucille Zemaitis

Introduction: Swami Satyananda Saraswati is the founder of the Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, Bihar, India. The yoga he teaches is not one of renunciation, but one of acceptance. You don't need to give up all your bad habits in order to take up yoga. The message is simply live your life as you normally do, with one alteration, take up yoga. It is guaranteed that even as little as ten minutes daily practice on a regular basis will greatly improve the quality of your life. Your bad habits will slip away of their own accord. Regularity and not length of practice is the crucial factor.

Swami Satyananda maintains that he is an ordinary man, and most certainly, during the course of the interview, I was not aware of the presence of Supreme Divinity. But there is a saying that goes, "Even in the presence of a saint, the thief will see only his pockets." My attitude in questioning him was one of diffidence towards the yogic knowledge he possessed as a result of constant practice over a long period of time. No attempt is made to contradict. The questions are based purely on personal interest.

For which people is ashram life unsuitable?

Ashram life is unsuitable for people who mistake it to be a life of escape from the realities, because they think that in ashram life people don't face the realities, they don't discharge their responsibilities. This sort of misunderstanding in the minds of the people creates an impression that ashram life is unsuitable for them, because they are dynamic by temperament, devoted and given to their responsibilities. Otherwise, for most people, ashram life is suitable.

When is someone ready to enter an ashram?

Entering into ashram life and living for some time in the ashram are two different things.

I mean entering into an ashram on a long term basis. When is one ready to do that?

When one is ready to work without any selfish motive for the welfare of all people in order to make himself competent and capable to help others.

I have heard one of your devotees say that there comes a time in every person's spiritual development when they reach a void and can progress no further without a guru. Can this guru be a person, place or thing at any point in time or can it be found within?

The real guru is within, but humans in general are not capable of contacting that guru. Therefore, they need an external guru in a physical form whom they can understand, whose interpretations they can follow and whose dictums they can carry out in their life. Once they have followed the living guru and have undergone a process of evolution in their own state of consciousness, then they can contact the inner guru, who is no other than God.

What do you mean by devotion?

By devotion I mean the channelling of normal attachment, love, hatred, jealousy, passion, emotion to one single ideal, where all these channels can find a process of sublimation.

I don't quite understand.

Everybody has heart, feelings, emotions, passions, love, attachment for things in his life. Now when all these are channelled towards one single ideal, they find transformation and sublimation. That is called bhakti yoga, the path of devotion.

Can one be devoted to two different things or two different people, or can it only ever be to one?

Real devotion is to one.

Is the taking of mantra diksha a form of spiritual initiation?

For the average person, mantra diksha is the first stage of initiation. There are many more initiations in the path of spiritual life.

Does the correct pronunciation of the Sanskrit terms in mantra and in kirtan enhance their effectiveness?

In mantra it is very important to pronounce correctly. In kirtan it is not so essential.

Is there a danger in the west that true seekers can become misguided by false prophets of Eastern mysticism?

There is always danger in every culture however great, that some seekers may be misguided, no matter how genuine and beneficial a movement might be to humanity. Just as a big tree gives shelter to benign birds, the shade of the tree can also give shelter to dacoits and bandits.

It has always been claimed that a lot of Eastern mysticism has been encouraged by the government in the USA to pervert the revolutionary movement. Would you accept that it would, in fact, be a perversion of the revolutionary movement, and do you think that such a thing could happen?

I have not heard anything about that, but I know that in the USA there are people who follow the spiritual path.

I'll give you an example. The particular person who made this claim enumerated several known revolutionaries, violent, active people, and said that these people had now joined ashrams, joined movements and left the revolutionary movement. Do you see this as being positive or negative?

I'm not aware of this. I think when one enters into spiritual life one undergoes a stage of personal revolution. When I took sannyasa and joined ashram life, it was a revolution by itself. I revolted against the established norms of society, the norms that society has accepted for centuries and centuries. Many things which are current in society I do not follow. So, entering into spiritual life is not a counter-revolutionary process.

Is it true that everything that happens in life is karmic?

Everything that happens in life come under the scheme of karma. It has a reason and it has a source and it has a basis. It is not accidental.

Why has it been the karma of some cultures to undergo so much suffering over such a long period of time?

Because those cultures did not follow the spiritual life and the spiritual ideals. They mixed it with social politics, social political ideals, and that is why there are untold sufferings.

Is that the case with India?

Sure.

Why is it the karma of some people to be born severely mentally retarded or physically handicapped, and how does it relate to their spiritual evolution?

When you follow spiritual life, then you develop clarity and purity in mind and body, and you have certain rules that control the psychological and biological processes. If you follow a particular culture which is not following spiritual discipline and ideals, it will ignore and neglect all the systems and rules which control the psychological, biological and emotional processes that govern the whole life span. That is

why the children of these generations are born with a lower mental capacity.

Is it possible to lose one's soul?

It is possible for a person to dissolve his personal consciousness into spiritual consciousness. This is how we talk in spiritual life. In worldly terms, yes we lose our soul many times to temptations, to all those things where the soul finds itself in torture and suffering.

But is there such a thing as eternal damnation or is it just figurative?

If the principle of evolution is a scientific fact, if the soul is not a static substance, if growth, progress and metamorphosis are a scientific, universal principle controlling not only the human beings, but other kingdoms as well, then there should not be anything like eternal damnation, condemnation.

What happens to animals when they die? Are they evolving too?

If evolution is a universal fact, then animals cannot be an exception because they are part of the universe. Similarly, in other spheres of existence also, there should be that metamorphosis, transmutation of the principle of consciousness. If body is the first and the last, then we don't talk about these matters at all, but if there is anything else beyond the body, then metamorphosis should be a reality and it should also govern the animal kingdoms as well.

Will all the problems and conflicts on this earth today ever be resolved?

I'm not pessimistic, but I believe that these problems are necessary to keep man occupied, to keep him growing. If there are no problems, no conflicts and no tensions, there is nothing for the mind to play with, and there is no reason why your mind should grow. If there is no hatred, no passion, no worry, no anxiety, then the mind becomes dull.

Is this what we are all growing towards?

I don't think so. I think we are growing more towards a spiritual consciousness by facing those realities that we call problems. I don't see that the problems will be resolved, but I see that consciousness will grow.

What is the place of the earth in the cosmos?

Just a point where universal soul finds itself in the process of growing and knowing.

Do you think that there is life on any other planets in our solar system?

Not in our solar system, but there is life in other solar systems because they are endless, they are not just a few.

In the course of our evolution, do we ever go into these other realms, these other solar systems?

Sure!

In our evolution, throughout our incarnations, are we always exclusively male or female, black or white, or do we interchange?

In reincarnation there is no such difference as male and female, black and white, Hindu, Muslim and Christian. The individual soul has to make a choice for the fulfilment of its desires.

How long is it after death that the soul is reincarnated?

For thirteen days after death there is no rebirth. Rebirth takes place only after thirteen days. In the case of an ordinary individual the rebirth is much quicker; the more one is experienced and has been leading the spiritual life, the more selective one becomes, so it takes much longer.

Can you tell us something about what happens in those thirteen days?

After death, the individual consciousness enters into a dormant, potential state, just like the seed of a tree. For

thirteen days it passes through the different realms or planes of existence, and then it goes to a particular plane of existence where it remains for a certain period, depending on its higher or lower karmas.

According to the science of reincarnation, there are seven planes for the consciousness to grow and live. The first is this earthly plane, then there are six more. The second and third planes are only for those who have to be reborn immediately on account of their deeper attachments to life. Having no certain preferences, choices and selections, they just want to be born and it doesn't matter where. They want food and it doesn't matter in which hotel.

The rest, who go to the higher planes, the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh dimensions of consciousness, take quite some time to be reborn. Due to the quality of their karma they have certain choices. When such a mother is ready, when such a father is ready, when such a family is ready, then they enter into the womb and are reborn.

Are there mental, psychic and spiritual differences between men and women?

Spiritually there is no difference. Physically there is definitely a difference. Emotionally there is a difference. Mentally there is a little difference; it depends on the conditions – for example, women remain at home and men go out; that creates a difference.

Given that two individuals will not cooperate in a specific sexual ritual designed to raise the consciousness, can one alone, through some unobstructive practice, elevate the sexual act?

There are certain practices in yoga such as amaroli, sahajoli and vajroli, by which this can happen. It is sublimation of the sexual energy into the higher energy and the higher reason.

Do you see marriage as nothing other than an institution, or are there higher laws pertaining to it?

It is difficult question because I have my own views. Most people will not be able to understand that, be they Christians, Hindus or Muslims. Marriage for spiritual evolution or as a social institution is not necessary, but thousands and thousands of people all over the world are psychologically weak, emotionally insecure. They are groping in darkness; they don't know what they have to do. It is for such people that the elders in the society have created a sort of organization or an institution called marriage, and this is what they have to get into. Although, for people who are spiritual seekers this institution is unnecessary.

What are said to be the spiritual repercussions of abortion?

I do not think that there are any spiritual repercussions because life is dying every minute. Even before abortion, when a man and woman meet, sometimes the sperm and ovum meet and die immediately. Is it not abortion? It is instant abortion, but we are not aware of it. Life comes into the foetus only after four months. Before four months it is just a tumour in the womb. If you remove a tumour, you are removing a living cell of the body, but that is not equivalent to killing. Abortion up to four months, before the independent life has been created, is definitely not anti-spiritual and does not block spiritual progress.

Are there any general rules in yoga for bringing up children?

Parents worry too much about their children. Children must be left with other children; they must be left to grow on their own. The duty of the parents is to take care of them as long as they are innocent, so that they don't get into trouble. I have seen myself, and most of you will agree, parents worry so much about their children that the children go wrong, just because they don't like it.

I am thinking of the first year of life in particular. How do parents encourage the good habits and discourage the bad?

You must set an example and children will follow it. When the child is in the womb, you can train him there, rather than trying to change and brainwash him after he is born. Life in the womb is more powerful and more receptive; there you can even change the entire structure of the DNA molecules.

Is there any positive way of using a drug, such as marijuana, for the ordinary man?

Psychologists have been using it, and I think the pharmacologists have also been using it for mental illnesses.

I'm thinking marijuana as a social drug.

I think, as far as my experience goes, one should avoid drugs completely, not because they block the spiritual progress, but for the people who are ignorant, who are slaves of their senses, it becomes a great addiction. The nerves of those drug users (who have a weaker brain) are shattered to pieces. In those who have a low rate of metabolism, the drugs are metabolized but remain saturated in the fibres of the body. Also, the use of drugs makes it impossible to keep a steady rhythm in the brain. When the natural brainwave patterns are disturbed at an early age, it is very difficult to initiate the resurrection of the normal brainwave patterns after thirty-five. Therefore, one should keep away from drugs as far as possible.

How do you believe heroin addicts can best be helped, and how do you see the future in terms of illegal narcotic use?

Drug addicts can best be helped by the practices in which purification is enhanced. The physical body should be purified internally as well as externally. When there is internal purification of acid, bile, phlegm, and rotten enzymes; toxified intestines, kidneys and spleen are purified. Endocrinal imbalance is another important factor. When the endocrinal imbalances or blockages are removed by certain postures,

by certain food, then the problem of drug addiction can be worked out much quicker and with far greater success.

In the future, will narcotic addiction continue in much the same fashion?

Narcotics will continue; you can't stop it.

The Kali yuga is the last of the yugas. When it ends, will we go back to the Satya yuga, or will something completely new happen?

Yes. Kali yuga is supposed to be the present age of which we have entered the 6,000th year. There are 426,000 years to go.

Will all that be happening here on earth?

Don't worry, the earth is not going to split. It has survived for three billion years, and maybe it can last that much longer again. It is not going to crack into two pieces.

Is the study of subjects such as tarot, astrology and palmistry related in any way to one's spiritual development?

Surely! They develop one's faith in spiritual entities, spiritual processes, those invisible powers – so, they are related.

Do you have any advice on how colours can be used to their best advantage?

Yes, there is a system of colour therapy. The best colour is geru (soft orange). The next best is white, then yellow, then green. These are the best colours and they can be used. Others colours can also be used in the form of dress and flowers.

There is a method called chromopathy, the therapy of colours, which is used in the treatment of mental and physical diseases. And there is the method of treating the lesser diseases by exposing pure water in coloured bottles to the sunlight.

Cork the bottles and expose them to the sunlight everyday. In one week they will be charged with the solar energy filtered

through the colours. This water is used to treat such diseases as diarrhoea, dysentery, cough and cold, and inflammations.

Colours have a definite effect on the human body, mind and emotions. Not much work has been done on colours, but we surely know that colours can be well utilized, even in the case of mental patients.

Some people believe that you harm flowers by picking them. Can you explain?

Well, I am one of them. Flowers have a place in the garden, not in vases. When they are in the garden, they purify the nature because they draw the energy, the shakti, the prana, from the plant and from the earth. The moment you pluck flowers and put them in a vase, they may purify your home, but they have no more prana, energy.

With a little prana, they may be able to leave you a very peaceful, pleasant, nice sensation, but if they live on the plant or tree, they help the plant also. Because the flower is not only an offspring of the plant, it is also the feeder of the plant. Once I did an experiment on a rose plant. I said that there should be no thorns, only flowers. So I took off one thorn and the whole plant died!

You see, the plant draws subtle energies through the flowers. The flowers are receptive, just like radar discs, and they can pick up greater energy for the plant than the leaf, thorn or branch, and much more than the root of the tree. The root only takes the gross energy from the earth and turns that into what you call life energy, prana. Thereby the plant lives, but there is something more that the plant requires. And these certain energies are drawn from the cosmos with the help of the thorns and the fur on the leaves. So, let the leaves remain on the plant, let the flowers stay there. Let them fall on their own. The right place for a flower is either on the plant or on the earth.

Is there any specific yogic practice that one can perform for immediate relief of feelings such as grief, anxiety, guilt, remorse, envy, competitiveness, jealousy or fear?

Concentration on one's natural breath, or rather, awareness of one's natural breath is the immediate way of relief from these things.

Is it possible for one to take on somebody else's karma?

It is possible for a mother, for a wife or a husband, for a guru, for a disciple, for one who loves somebody, and it is an automatic process.

Does love have to be there for it to happen?

It is automatic contact. You can even take on the karma of your enemy. The communication, the psychic link has to be forged. It doesn't happen by thinking about it, it happens automatically. The depth of awareness is responsible for this – the depth of awareness towards an enemy, a friend, your own lover, your own child, or anybody.

What is tantra yoga and how is it different to other yogas?

Tantra and yoga are not two different things. Tantra is a theoretical philosophy; yoga is the practical, applied science. Rather, yoga is applied tantra and tantra is theoretical yoga. The philosophy of tantra believes in two eternal realities; it is dualistic philosophy. One is known as the eternal purusha, or consciousness, and the other is known as the eternal prakriti, nature. Both are parallel, but they are different from each other, non-convertible. In mythological terminology, they are known as Shiva and Shakti. Shiva is purusha, the consciousness, and Shakti is prakriti, the energy. Energy is dynamic and consciousness is static. Purusha is the vehicle and prakriti is the cause.

The literal meaning of tantra is a system by which one expands the mind and releases the energy. The philosophy of tantra is quite a technical thing, but the point is how to expand the mind and how to release the energy? When this question is put, then yoga comes in. So, tantra and yoga are not two different sciences. The practical side is yoga, hatha

yoga, raja yoga, mantra, meditation and breathing. Yoga is tantra in application.

Relating to that, there seems to be a dilemma between resisting and the tension that builds up in resisting, and the necessity for controlling your behaviour, your urges.

In tantra there is nothing like this. You are supposed to lead your natural life. It is not a puritanical philosophy. That is why tantra has never become a religion; there is no puritanism in it. You have puritanism in Christianity, in Islam and in Judaism, but in not in tantra.

Tantra says, "Well, if you drink, that's okay." I'm not asking you to drink for the sake of tantra but if you are doing it, you can still go on with the practice. If you are married, and if your sexual urges are great, that is alright. They do not at all stand in the way of your spiritual evolution. It is the practice that matters. If you are able to capture the process, the purusha and prakriti, if you are able to capture that experience, everything is accomplished. If you want to live the life of a celibate, well and good; you can do it. But if you want to carry on with the fulfilment of your urges, the natural biological urges, in the normal way, tantra will not tell you no.

We do not lead the political movements; we are not affiliated with them, and sometimes we don't even know what is happening. But we are concerned with people all over the world and to them we give a philosophy and a clear view of life. It is the people who make up a political order; it is they who follow the political philosophy. If I can go to a country and contact twenty or thirty thousand people, and give them a clear idea about spiritual life, maybe their children will become powerful political philosophers, and in this way any brute politics can be wiped from the face of the earth without an open political revolt.

If a particular country has a population of three million people and they are all made to follow a brute type of political philosophy, where there is no respect for human rights, no

respect for many things like theism, belief and faith, we don't have to just stand around and ignore it. We just give a clarity of vision to the people as to how they should think. If I can give my child or your child a lesson by which he learns to read the ABC's, he can read not only Shakespeare, he can read mythology also. Clarity of vision, a balanced approach to reality is the contribution of tantra, so we don't have to get into politics.

What are the main obstacles to spiritual development for those of the rajasic temperament?

I don't think that there are any obstacles. We thought some two or three decades back that people had become so materialistic, wanting this and that, our spiritual philosophy is going to be doomed. Ten years later, things took a turn and the same people about whom we had been very pessimistic, came forward as spiritual seekers. I'm sure that if more people are there to awaken others to the spiritual reality, we can give a message to each and everybody. Everybody is ready, even the man who says, "Oh, I don't care about spiritual life."

How do you reconcile the apparent contradiction that we are entering the Kali yuga, the age of darkness, but the awareness of spiritual realities appears to be growing?

I never said during the course of my discussion with you that Kali yuga is an age of darkness. I believe that in the age we are entering, man is becoming more and more intellectual and involved in hatred and jealousy, and more aware of the fine sentiments as well. At this time he is undergoing a state of terrible conflict in his mind. He is not able to settle himself at one point. He is torn between the two.

No, this is not the dark age. It is the age of conflict, when the sensitive mind has become receptive to both sides at the same time. If I have opened my eyes and I can see a flower, I can also see a dirty thing there; one causes attraction and the other repulsion. This is where man stands today, and he is going to become more sensitive if he is to evolve towards

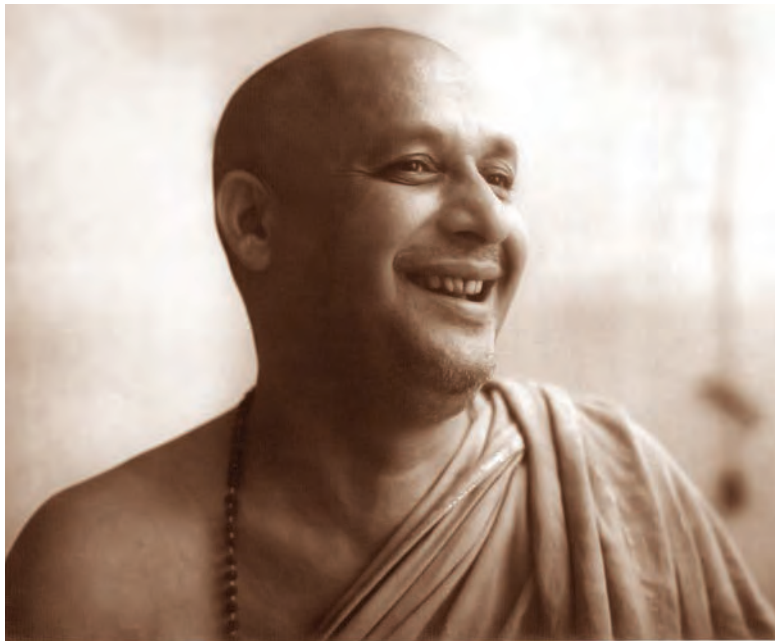
higher consciousness and knowledge. The mind of man is not a blunt substance; it is very sensitive and it is aware of time, space and objects. So, there is no apparent contradiction, as I do not believe that the Kali yuga is a dark age. I think that there is a golden lining on the horizon.

If a person dies or is born in one's presence, is there a specific non-religious ritual that can be performed?

Whatever ceremony you perform, it will be religious. You will pray for him, may be not in Christian songs, in Hindu songs, or in Buddhist, but you will pray in English.

Is there a practice for releasing the energy of emotional repressions?

Yes. The name of the practice is inner silence or antar mouna, preceded by the practice of trataka, one-pointed gazing.



26

Solution to Man's Spiritual Crisis

Satyananda Ashram, Mangrove Mountain, Australia, 7 November 1980.

Over the last several decades, things have gone very well for the yogic culture. All over the world, leading scientists, doctors, social thinkers and even politicians have begun to feel the impact of yoga. People are realizing that yoga is the solution for mankind. Yoga has emerged out of man's consciousness in response to his needs. When you are thirsty, you seek water. When you are hungry, you seek food. When it is cold, you seek a warm shelter. People today are looking for a solution to a problem which is neither concerned with the mind nor with emotional distress. Rather, man has become aware that he is in the grip of a spiritual crisis.

Hence the confusion in everybody's mind. We are confronted by the question of what to do with our lives. We have to face this question. What is the purpose of life? What is life for? What is the best possible use I can make of my life? So far there has been no answer to these pressing questions, and scientists from both the East and West have begun to rethink their theories. The greatest scientist of our time, Albert Einstein, said that matter can be split and from that energy, nuclear energy can be produced.

Five thousand years ago Samkhya philosophy said that the mind can be broken and from that, energy can be produced.

The way to break the mind and release that energy is through yoga. Yoga has not emerged because of our efforts, but because of the needs of the times and the requirements of humanity. Even if we were not allowed to teach people about yoga, man would discover it for himself. Yoga is going to become the culture of humanity. It is a very powerful way of life and it is through yoga that man will find a solution to his spiritual crisis and gain a true understanding of himself.

Playthings of the mind

Decades ago, Carl Jung, one of the leading thinkers in modern psychology, wrote in his famous classics that the ultimate solution for man lies in the discipline provided by yoga. He stated clearly that yoga is a science which does not ignore any dimension of man's existence, nor does it erect any artificial barriers between these dimensions. The body is not divorced from the mind and the mind is not separated from the spirit. Body, mind and spirit, each of the three faces of the human personality are provided with a very systematic and scientific discipline.

Jung has written a lot about yoga. He indicated that he felt the time had come when man should not only look at the disease from which he is suffering, but that he should also look at the cause of that disease. He felt that it was time to discover not only the cause, but a solution to the cause as well. Man's problem lies in his own concept of life. That is the cause of his disease and that has to be solved.

Therefore, we do not talk of one dimension of healing. We talk of transformation and metamorphosis. It is very important for everybody to understand this. When you see a child with his toys, you see how attached he is to them. If one is lost or snatched away by another child, he really feels it. His emotions are affected by what happens to his toys. However, when the same child becomes a young man, does he even remember his toys? No. What did he do to forget them? Nothing. Transformation of the state of his mind led him to transcend this attachment.

In the mind we have many formations, complexes, habits and patterns, positive and negative, painful as well as pleasant, and we are at war constantly with all these. We fight with our dreams and, by remaining within their limitations, we are in conflict with them as well. That is why nobody is healed, nobody is cured. When you know the art of transforming the mental stuff, in the course of time, your mental formations and habits are automatically transcended.

You do not have to fight with worry, attachments, complexes, agonies, restlessness, inferiority and superiority, with all kinds of states of mind, both positive and negative. You don't even have to look at them. Who experiences bliss, agony and pain? Who experiences happiness? What are these things? They are all perceptions of the mind and this mind has to be transformed.

Yoga can transform the entire structure of the mind. When you come to me and say, "My mind is wavering, my mind is dissipated, I feel unhappy, I am depressed," I say, "Don't worry about these things. They are merely toys to which you are attached and which are so important to you that you cry when they are lost or broken. Open yourself spiritually and you will see that these toys have no meaning. When you realize that, they will no longer be of any concern to you. Then they will become the playthings of the next generation."

The process of transformation

All this has implications regarding what we understand about the nature of the mind. It means that the mind is not thought, emotion, anger, hunger, thirst, desire, passion. These are not the mind but rather what we call emanations of the mind. The artificial light which you have in this room is not light, it is an emanation of light. The heat which you have from the heater is an emanation of the heater. In the same way, all these symptoms are not the mind. You cannot say, for instance, that the mind is unhappy. The mind cannot be unhappy. What is happening is that your mind is sick; it is giving out emanations and you are experiencing unhappiness.

In the existence of man, the mind is a very mysterious substance. I am not talking about God or the spirit, I am talking about the mind. In yoga, mind is known as *chitta*, which literally means the stuff responsible for awareness, the quality of awareness. The mind is composed of twenty-six elements. When we split these elements, there is no longer any mind. If you remove the bulb, the switch and the wires, then there is no electricity.

Mind is not a homogeneous substance; it is a combination of elements and in order to transform the mind these elements have to be broken down. This process takes place in tantra through the practice of *kriya yoga*. When it occurs, energy is released. In yoga this energy is known by different names. Some call it *kundalini*, some call it *jnana* and others call it *samadhi*.

We are talking about the transformation of the mind, our struggle or battle with the mind. For us, the mind is not Satan or the devil, it can be examined scientifically. However, I still do not know if the mind is in the body or the body is in the mind, or whether God lives in our hearts or our hearts live in God. This has yet to be determined. The mind is definitely a greater, broader and more infinite substance than the body, which is limited by material associations. But the mind still resides within the realm of our human existence and it can be visualized. This visualization of the mind takes place in three stages : first *pratyahara* (sensory withdrawal), then *dharana* (concentration) and finally through *dhyana* (meditation).

It is written very clearly in the *Yoga Sutras* of Sage Patanjali that the mind should undergo a series of processes. Just as you take some cotton and make some yarn, then a piece of cloth can be woven and from that a shirt can be made. Of course, the spirit is made of the same cotton, but it has been completely transformed. Similarly, when you take milk and turn it into curd, then butter, cheese and fat, where has the milk gone? It has undergone a set of successive changes, and this is how the transformation of the mind occurs.

This transformation comes about in five broad stages. Initially the mind is very dull. In the second stage, it is dissipated. The third stage is the oscillating mind. In the fourth stage, the mind becomes one-pointed, and finally in the fifth stage, it comes under control. This gradual evolution of the mind is brought about by the practices of yoga. This evolution eventually results in the complete transformation of the mind. From there the mind can move into higher realms.



27

Satsang

Satyananda Ashram, Mangrove Mountain, Australia, 8 November 1980.

Do children respond to the spiritual qualities of yoga?

Children do imbibe the spiritual qualities and it is not necessary that you give them lessons on yoga, or on spiritual life. Give them the yogic atmosphere. You have many children living here in the ashram; you have children in your homes. You just have to talk with them and give them a spiritual background, a spiritual life.

Why do you travel to so many different parts of the world in order to impart yoga?

First of all, I must make it very clear that I go all over the world because I'm inspired to do it. It is not my pleasure and it is not my choice. When I met my guru for the last time, in 1956 in the month of April, he gave me initiation into kriya yoga and he told me, "You will have to go to every part of the world, across the boundaries of India, transcending the limitations of culture and language and be an inspiration to everybody. You must encourage the people to practise a little bit of yoga for their spiritual evolution."

Since that time, wherever I go, I have felt that if one soul becomes spiritually aware and is inclined to look within rather than outside, then my purpose for visiting that country is

fulfilled. When I came to Australia in 1968 for the first time, I knew nobody, but now I know hundreds of people who are living a sincere, spiritual life, householders, karma sannyasins and sannyasins and karma sannyasins.

This external world is always there for us, and we know it very well. But there is an experience within us in embryo form, and this is the experience of light, an experience of homogeneous awareness. When we begin to walk on that path, then our spiritual destiny comes to the first stage of fulfilment. For that I have come to Australia this time, and I will be coming again. I want to see that more and more people understand the way to inner peace and inner completeness.

How can we be more open to the transmission of energy between guru and disciple and what sort of things block the transmission?

The relationship between guru and disciple is a very important relationship. There are certain interactions taking place between guru and disciple, and often these lead both of them or one of them to a state of conflict. Such interactions which lead to conflict are to be strictly avoided. Though guru and disciple appear to be two points apart from each other, in spiritual life they can come very close. In order to come closer to one another, we should be very careful in our ordinary interactions as well as in our emotional interactions.

You love your parents, children, husband or wife, relatives, and you give them part of your emotional personality and your physical services. However, you must remember that your physical, mental, intellectual and emotional interactions have nothing to do with your relationship to guru. Guru and disciple are united through a spiritual link, and this link can become a reality only when the other links are withdrawn. Then the spiritual link is forced to develop and a very subtle union takes place between them. This is not a union between body and body, mind and mind, emotions and emotions. This is a higher union called spiritual union.

When this spiritual union takes place, then the transmissions begin between the two individuals. The relationship between the guru and the disciple is created only for this purpose. There are many great people in the world, but I can't have them all for my guru. I go to one guru and he satisfies me; I am aware of his spiritual emanations and suddenly we get plugged to one another. When we get plugged in to each other on the spiritual plane, that is a permanent connection.

There are many people with whom I'm plugged all the time and the moment the current begins to flow, the disciple begins to receive. In order to be able to receive the transmission, disciples and guru must raise their consciousness to one higher level.

Swamiji, could you please explain why it is that female sannyasins spend more time in the kitchen and cleaning toilets than the male sannyasins?

This is happening in the Australian and the Indian ashrams. but in other parts of the world it is different.

You see, by nature women have devotion, dedication, tenderness, and all that is a necessary ingredient for the tasty dish. That is why I think here in Mangrove Mountain ashram the sannyasins are looking after the kitchen. You can also experiment by keeping male sannyasins in the kitchen, and see what type of food you get. In Munger ashram it is different. There I only send the sannyasins to the kitchen. I send only the sannyasins. That is why the food in Munger is not as tasty as it is here.

Cleaning the toilets is done by the sannyasins because that is their training. When they were born, their mothers did that job; their fathers did not do it. Now they have grown and they do that job because they are masters of it. So I think it is alright if they look after the toilets.

Women represent the mother power. I am speaking frankly and seriously now. Mother does not mean the giver of birth to a baby. Mother is the higher aspect of creation, protection

and benediction; that is called motherhood, the mother aspect of the Divine. In the world you can see that higher aspect of God in the form of mother.

The mother has always been foremost in the scheme of creation. Whether in the family or in an ashram, it is the woman, the mother, who must look after the most important aspects of life. Now tell me, what are the most important aspects? Kitchen and toilet. Of course, you can put sannyasins in the press or in the office; it is okay, but any man can do that work. However, if the food is not sattvic or not prepared properly and if the toilets are not clean, we will get sick. If the press does not run well, if the office does not run well, it does not matter. But if the kitchen does not run well, all these people will leave tomorrow morning.

Therefore, you must appreciate that the sannyasins in this ashram are doing the most important job and they should not feel that their work is inferior, nor should others be critical of it.

Why is it so difficult to concentrate the mind during meditation?

The mind may be thinking positive things or negative things, you must just witness the processes taking place in the mind without being affected by them. What usually happens when you are concentrating while meditating is that positive or negative thoughts come into the mind and you feel very unhappy. However, if you are concentrated and get good meditation, then you are very happy; you are satisfied.

There are three different stages or layers of the mind: the harmonized mind, the turbulent mind and the dull mind. When the mind is in a turbulent state, it is known as rajasic mind. All the time the mind is jumping and if you try to control it, a lot of tensions are created. At that time, what you should do is practise your mantra or concentrate on the external object. If the mind wanders away from the object of concentration and thinks many different things, you should

not oppose it. Rather you must observe what the mind is thinking, feeling and visualizing.

This process of witnessing can also cure so many physical ailments – nervous depression and the diseases of other layers of the human personality. When you are concentrating or trying to concentrate, there are moments when you have so many memories coming into the consciousness, either directly or in a symbolic form. As these images come into the mind, we become aware of the archetypes stored up in the brain.

Man has hundreds and thousands of experiences from the past stored up in the brain in a symbolic form. Every experience is transferred to the brain and mind in a symbolic way. If you look at a flower and appreciate it, that experience is reduced to a symbol, which is registered or stored in your brain and in your consciousness. Like this, there are millions of these symbolic experiences in man's brain.

As these symbols are stored up in the unconscious body, when you start concentration, then they gradually begin to come out. When you start practising mantra, then the lid is opened and the *samskaras*, the latent impressions or the archetypes, come up from the unconscious body to the subconscious mind to the conscious area, and you begin to see many of them either as a direct image or in a symbolic form. Sometimes you visualize the incidents of the past exactly in the same way, and many times you visualize the incidents in a symbolic fashion.

These images that come up during the practice of kundalini yoga, kriya yoga, raja yoga or mantra yoga should not be suppressed by force. If you are concentrating on the light, the more you are concentrating, the more the images will come out. After a few seconds, you will find that you have gone very far. Then you feel very sorry and you begin to say, "Oh, my mind is dissipated." But please remember that this is not dissipation.

The purpose of mantra and other techniques of pratyahara is to expel these archetypes, which will again come in front of you in the form of stronger images in later stages of samadhi

if you don't expel them now. So, witnessing the mind is a very important practice in yoga and it has to be perfect. Now it is easy to witness the mind. If you concentrate and images or thoughts come to you, you can just witness them. But there are certain moments later when you enter into the state of meditation, when you are not aware of yourself, when your consciousness is transported into another realm, then you begin to see the images and to have experiences which you have no control over.

Therefore, it is much better to force the karmas out as long as you are on the conscious plane. When you transcend the plane of consciousness and you go to the subconscious plane, or what you call semi-samadhi, deep meditation, then the images that come to you cannot be controlled because your ego is not present. So, you don't know how to strike them off, how to eliminate them.

I'll give you a very simple example. If you sit in a particular place and if a very unhappy idea comes to you, you may say, "I don't want it." You just eliminate it by willpower. But if you are dreaming in the night and if you dream that somebody is coming with a revolver to shoot you, you can do nothing because ego is not there. In the dream whatever is happening has to happen.

Similarly, in the stages of deep meditation there are experiences which are so compelling that you cannot get rid of them. So during the practice of dharana, when you are concentrating on the object, you must see that the purging takes place. A lot of ideas, images, memories, unhappiness, happiness, all the good and bad experiences, the guilt, the conflict, the obsessions, the complexes will come up and you must look at them. That is called witnessing the mind.

It is not just a few thoughts. The deeper you go, the greater the crowd. There could be moments during your mantra or in ordinary meditation when there is confusion in the realm of thinking. So many thoughts come up at the same time that you can't even distinguish them. It is very difficult for me to express it. That is called purging. It is shankhaprakshalana of

the psychic body. At this time, you should not be discouraged or affected adversely. You must say that this has to happen.

Many times we have seen that when a thought emerges on the conscious plane, it immediately releases a particular disease from the body. I have seen so many cases where the most deadly diseases have just gone away miraculously overnight by the witnessing of one thought and the expansion of it. So witnessing the thought, the images, the whole process, and everything that is taking place in the mind during the mantra meditation or any type of meditation is a very powerful sadhana known as antar mouna.

Can you explain the difference between bhakti, bhava and prem?

Bhakti means devotion, *bhava* means attitude and *prem* means love. In the fundamental analysis they are the same expressions. However bhakti is total surrender. It is complete fusion of individual awareness into supreme awareness. When you love someone and you lose yourself in him, not only on the physical or the emotional plane but totally, even the ego becomes fused and completely lost – that is called bhakti.

Just as you pine for life when you are thrown into the sea, you fight for it, in the same way, when the totality of your being becomes aware of the higher self, it is pining for fusion with that. This higher state of being is known as bhakti. At that time, there is no notion that I want to become you. No, there is no ‘I’ so there is no question of becoming; there is only you. Where there is a notion that I want to become you, there is duality. I am aware of myself, therefore I want to become you. However, in bhakti the ‘I’ is lost; there is only you. That state where there is only the self-awareness is known as bhakti.

This bhakti is twofold. One aspect is the ritualistic bhakti which you perform in the temples and churches according to your religious and cultural background. That is more or less a rehearsed drama. You may or may not practise that because it is something like left, right, about turn. It is just a religious parade. However, the other form of bhakti is a dynamic one,

and that is called the supreme bhakti. Here the self, that is myself, wants to become one with you. That is the first process, and gradually the mind is fused to such an extent that I lose awareness of myself and I see only yourself.

This has been exemplified in the story of Radha and Krishna. When Lord Krishna was in his teens he met a young girl of his own age, Radha. They first saw each other on the banks of the Yamuna, and at that time Radha started feeling love for Krishna and he started feeling absolute love for her. That was the first and last time they met. Radha had her own life and Krishna had his own life. That is another story. He became a great warrior, a statesman, a teacher and so on. Radha never lived with him and he never lived with her, nor did they have any chance to see or talk to each other after that. He went away to the western part of India and she went somewhere else. She only lived a story, but he lived a history and he was married eight times.

In our own lives we have created patterns in the mind, because we want to love someone and we want to give a direction to our sentiments, as to how they should be directed towards him. So there are paternal, fraternal and marital sentiments. Many people say that God is our husband. In Christianity, you know how Christ is the husband and we are his wives.

The gopis considered Krishna as their husband. You can also consider God as your son, if this idea can capture your mind. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna considered Krishna as his friend because the idea of a friend could capture his imagination, his emotions, his sentiments. Now, for instance, if I consider God as my father, it won't capture my imagination because I don't care for fathers. However, if I were to consider God as my guru, perhaps that would capture my sentiment and then as a disciple I could direct my feeling to my guru as if he were God.

Although some people consider God as father, mother, brother, friend or husband, there is another form of sentiment in which you regard God as your enemy. So there are people

who don't love God as you do. They don't do japa, *Om Namah Shivaya*, *Om Namah Shivaya*, as you do, but everywhere they go they talk against God. They say, "Where is God? He must be dead. These people are all poor and suffering. If there is any God, how could he allow this to happen?" At least this sentiment keeps you aware of God. This is negative bhava, the previous forms were positive bhavas. In negative bhava, every negation is an assertion. If you abuse me all day, it's alright because the negative attitude is a very powerful attitude, it works.

The gopis had positive bhava. They considered Krishna to be their husband and all the time they were aware of him. The moment they heard Krishna's flute at midnight, they would run out of their houses to go and play with him. When Krishna left Mathura, which is near Agra, he travelled very far to a place called Dwaraka, in Gujarat, and he never came back to Mathura. Then all the gopis who were his playmates in childhood felt sorry and they began to suffer very much mentally. They couldn't eat and they couldn't sleep; they had all the same problems that you have when you lose your boyfriend or girlfriend.

Now, it so happened that Lord Krishna asked his disciple and friend Uddho, who always used to accompany him, "Hey, why don't you go to Mathura and teach the people yoga?" Uddho asked, "To whom will I teach yoga?" Krishna replied, "Those gopis who used to be my playmates when I was in my teens. It's a nice idea to have a seminar in Mathura." So Uddho went to Vrindavan all alone. By that time all the gopis had grown up. When they heard that someone had come from Dwaraka, the place of Sri Krishna, they were so happy. They thought at least they could touch his feet; even though they were not Krishna's, still they had trodden the land where Krishna had been walking.

In the evening Uddho sat down amongst the gopis and said, "Alright, I'm going to teach you yoga." They asked, "What yoga are you going to teach us? Do you mean the yoga by which you forget yourself or remember yourself? If you

mean the yoga by which you forget yourself, it is of no use because we have already forgotten ourselves. Our mind has only one awareness, not two, and that has gone to Krishna. We have nothing, no mind. Tell us how we can practise yoga, how we can practise pranayama, how we can practise meditation, because we have one mind, one heart, and that he has taken away. It is always with him.”

Uddho thought to himself, “These are difficult people to teach.” Then he asked the gopis, “But how do you say that your heart has been taken away?” They answered, “Yes, Krishna is our husband and we are eternally married.” Uddho said, “Then why do you keep yourself in such an untidy way? You don’t clean your hair and your clothes are dirty. You look shocking!” They said, “Look here, we have no mind for such things. We have only one awareness and that is of Krishna, whom we loved and played with in our youth. Physically he may not be with us, but all the time we have been thinking only about him. And sometimes this introversion and intense thought awareness continues all day long and all night long, all week long and all month long. So, it is impossible for us to think about our clothes and our body, or even about what others think about us.”

Another word associated with bhakti is prem. It is a sadhana by itself. Prem means love. When you approach the divinity, or you approach God or the idea of God, or when you approach a saintly person or a guru, then you try to practise devotion to him. Although you may call it devotion, actually at that time it is not; it is prem. The preliminary form of devotion is prem, love, and the ultimate form of love is devotion. That has to be practised through fixing your mind by certain attitudes.

28

The Will of God

Satyananda Ashram, Mangrove Mountain, Australia, 10 November 1980.

God's will, also known as divine will, is a universal reality. It is the most powerful force that conducts each and every activity, seen as well as unseen. When man is attracted by maya, he is led far away from this divine will and he becomes weak, full of fear and anxiety. Once he transcends the barriers of the mind, he begins to realize the will of God, which is the destiny of all creation. Once he knows the will of God, then he knows how to manage his affairs and how to work.

As long as we have personal desires, even spiritual life remains a matter of ambition. There will be not one but many problems. You may practise yoga and other things, but there has to be a very important and central philosophy – “Thy will be done.” When this philosophy emanates from the depths of your whole being, then whatever you face in life becomes a matter of joy and not a psychological or psycho-emotional problem.

In fact, there are no real problems in life. We only think we have problems because we do not understand life in light of the divine will. In this world there is everything – rivers, oceans, deserts, mountains, valleys, forests – but when we stay in the desert, then the desert becomes a problem. If we stay in the valley of Kashmir, that too becomes a problem. Man is

dissatisfied with life because he has not tried to understand its universal aspect. He sees things in the limited sense. That is why there are problems, not only in the lives of sincere spiritual aspirants, but in people everywhere.

The time lag

Nowadays life is changing very fast and everything is different from what it used to be. Our ancestors had to work extremely hard. They had to bring water and carry loads, either on their shoulders or on donkeys and ponies. They had to walk miles and miles for marketing. From dawn to dusk they were so involved in their external problems that they had no time to consider the internal problems, the complexes and conflicts that are constantly going on within the mind.

During the last century, however, technology has advanced to such a degree that now you can travel to any point in the world within a matter of hours, dial the telephone and speak to anyone at any distance within a matter of seconds. You don't have to go for water, just open the tap; press the switch and there is light.

Soon you may be able to prepare your meals in one and a half minutes, using sound waves to cook rather than electricity. If it only takes one and a half minutes to prepare your food, what are you going to do with the rest of your time? There will be computers to do all the work. The children may not even have to go to school. They will just turn on the television and tune into a class going on in history, physics, biology, mathematics, chemistry or geography.

This is the way things are going now. For the first time in history, man is becoming so free that he doesn't have enough problems to occupy his mind. Recently, in Scandinavia, I was confronted with many youths and at first it was difficult for me to ascertain the nature of their deep-seated discontent. I asked them whether they had any problems concerning education, marriage, employment, housing, fuel, energy or anything else. They all replied, "No, we have no such problems." So I told them, "Yes, that is your problem." When man has no

problems in material life, he has to deal with the mind, and that is the greatest problem.

Finding the balance

More than five thousand years ago, when Indian civilization was at its zenith, the people were faced with these same problems of the mind and psyche, of nervous imbalance and spiritual disharmony. At that time they began to think about finding a way out. So the science of yoga was revived in order to channel man's mental, emotional and spiritual energies.

Today, as modern life takes man progressively further from nature, he will have to come closer to yoga in order to compensate for his lost harmony. In fact, we are already witnessing a massive return to yoga, as people everywhere are looking for more constructive ways to use their time. Yesterday yoga was an unknown byword, but today it is being practised by a significant proportion of the population, and its adherents are rapidly increasing. Yoga is beginning to penetrate every sphere of life.

When we speak of yoga, we do not just mean asanas and pranayama. Yoga is the complete science of man's mental, physical and emotional personality. There are many paths – karma yoga, the yoga of dynamic expression in life; bhakti yoga, the yoga of channelling the emotions; raja yoga, the yoga of control over the psychic personality; jnana yoga, the yoga of understanding the deeper secrets of universal life; kundalini yoga, the yoga of awakening the dormant potential, the creative force in man. Yoga actually means all these and, therefore, we should combine all forms of yoga in our life.

In man there is a hidden energy, an evolved power that is still dormant but can be awakened through the practices of yoga. In the past there were only a handful of saints, sages and mystics who had this shakti awakened in them. Now, however, the time has come when man has to transcend the lower mental plane and try to live in harmony with the cosmos on a higher spiritual plane. The awakening of kundalini is a very important event in the evolution of man and it has already

started to take place. In a few decades we should have many more people with developed spiritual awareness.

God and guru

When we speak of spiritual awareness, there is an important aspect which must be remembered – that of God and guru. We may talk about ontological, cosmological and teleological proof for the existence of God, but the knowledge of God is not yet awakened in man. The belief we have now is purely intellectual, based on what we have heard from our parents and teachers. In order to awaken true faith in God, true awareness of the transcendental reality, there has to be an igniting force. Just as you detonate a bomb, in the same way, the inner living faith, not the intellectual or scriptural one, has to be detonated and awakened. In order to awaken it, you have to accept a guru.

Guru is the stimulating factor, the detonator, because you can see him and understand him. There is no question of belief because he exists in name and form. You have a finite, limited mind by which you understand and define time, space and object. Guru is within this range, and with your finite mind you can comprehend him. Of course, in the ultimate sense guru is definitely not finite, he is infinite.

What is infinite? That which is not within the category of the finite mind. How can we contain the infinity of divinity within the finite mind? It's not possible. So first of all, this finite mind has to be transformed, the limitations have to be dropped. In order to transcend this finite mind and develop an infinite instrument of experience, kundalini must be awakened.

When the kundalini wakes up, the finite mind is exploded. With the destruction of this lower self, an infinite instrument of experience is gained by which you are able to behold the true reality of God. So guru is the first step on the spiritual path. God, divinity, Supreme atman, paramatman may be your goal, but you have to start by accepting a guru and forming a sincere discipleship.

The brother never becomes the father

Discipleship is more important than guruhood. A true disciple is one who develops tremendous awareness during the course of his life. For him, the guru is always near. The attitude of a true disciple never changes. The disciple always remains a disciple; for him there is no promotion.

In history only a few gurus are born, all the rest are disciples. You may consider those who have lived the spiritual life and are more advanced than you as your gurus, but they are your elder brothers. They know more so they become the guide, just as an elder brother looks after the little ones. But the brother never becomes the father. Therefore, remain a disciple and try to develop the qualities of a disciple, then the inner awareness will become effulgent.

A true disciple never feels mistreated. Those who claim to be cheated by the guru are actually cheats themselves. They are never able to develop the attitude of a disciple. So do not go about insulting gurus. You will only get a guru in your own image, nothing more than that.

Do not waste your time going from place to place trying to find the greatest guru – one who performs miracles, one who is more intellectual, one who is robust with a long, flowing beard. Such a disciple never comprehends the depth of a great man who is deeper than the ocean, broader than the sky.

Continue with your spiritual practices and go ahead with great faith and humility. Come to the ashram from time to time, and try to live as quietly as possible. Do not worry about the vacuum in life. Live in the will of God. I am speaking from my own experience, not from the books. God is first and last. Ultimately his will comes true. You can do nothing; you are only an instrument.

Total dedication

During my early years, I had no idea in my mind about teaching yoga, forming ashrams, making disciples, touring the world and establishing centres. I was the type of person who would go away into seclusion for years. I preferred to

remain in hibernation. That was my joy because I didn't want to think, it was my personal ambition not to think at all, but the Divine had willed something else.

I never wanted an ashram, but I had to build ashrams. I never wanted to have any dealings with money or people, but I had to deal with money and with people. I never believed that man could evolve through any practice; really that was my faith. I never believed that man had to do anything for his spiritual evolution. I thought, "What for? God has given me birth, it is his duty to look after me. What if I am wretched, a criminal or a saint? He has made me that, I haven't made myself. Let him face it." There was a poem written by a great devotee or *bhakta* of India who said :

*All is Thy will.
Thy will be done.
Whether you raise me
To the height of spiritual glory
Or you throw me down
Into the abyss of hell,
I accept it,
Readily, happily, with pleasure
Because that is Thy will.
I am the chariot,
You are the charioteer.
I am the horse,
You are the master,
Keep me as you like.
Use me, misuse me or abuse me,
I have nothing to defend.*

This is the attitude of total dedication. Man has to do nothing, just surrender himself to God's will. But you know how difficult it is to remain completely at His will. When you have losses and failures, then you are full of complaints. Where is the submission? When life becomes dedicated and everything is surrendered, placed completely at the disposal of that

Supreme will, then you must be prepared to live calmly and quietly under any circumstances.

Even if your husband or wife deserts you, you can accept it as divine will. When the scales are heavily loaded against you, consider the situation as a gift from Him. Everything, not only the valuables, pleasures and comforts, but also the difficulties, humiliations and hardships should be considered as gifts, an expression of His will. This is the fundamental faith that is lacking in our spiritual life today.

Most things we say about God are just intellectual gymnastics. We read this book and that book and we go on quoting, but the mind is not impressed. We say, “My Lord, I am always dying for you. Thy will be done, but please bring back my husband.” What is this business in life, trying to surrender everything to Him, but keeping a straw for yourself, and then suffering on account of that straw?

Bhakti is total dedication to God, to the divine will, the cosmic or universal process of which you are a tiny part. You are nothing; you are smaller than a molecule or an atom. You are a tiny cog in that untold universal process. Things are moving along in the history and geography of divinity. You have to be tossed this way or that way and if you don’t accept it, you will always be unhappy.

Yogic philosophy

The secret of happiness is to understand the mysteries of divine will, the laws of creation and of karma. This means that the whole philosophy of life has to be changed. Right from the very beginning we have been taught to love pleasure and to hate pain. In yogic philosophy it is said that experiences which are born of senses and sense objects end in pain. The wise men do not accept them as reality because they have a beginning and an end, and are therefore not permanent. When the experience comes to an end, it is finished, whether pleasant or painful.

It is not easy to restructure the whole way of thinking, the total philosophy of life. This is what we are trying to achieve

with the sannyasins, but it is not always successful. Many times you will stumble and fall, but this does not matter as long as you are able to pick yourself up again and continue walking. A simple way of life with minimum requirements and a simple way of thinking – this is the yogic philosophy. The rest of the time you should try to develop the awareness of your consciousness. The light will come.

In the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna asks Krishna, “Lord, please show me your cosmic form so that I may see and know you as God.” To this request, Krishna replies: “It is not easy to see the divine form with these eyes, with this mind and awareness because they are limited.” But Arjuna is persistent until finally Krishna relents and says, “Alright, I will show you my cosmic form.” But as soon as it appears, Arjuna has a mind exploding experience and he cries out in terror, “Please Lord, remove this experience; it’s too frightening. I want to see you in your human form which I knew before and which I can understand.”

This shows the necessity of preparation in spiritual life. There is no point in awakening the cosmic experience until you are ready to handle it. Therefore, first of all comes the guru. Next is the transformation of the whole structure of consciousness. Then you arrive at the stage where you begin to realize the great cosmic nature, the law of the Divine. After this, life becomes smooth sailing. There is no more pain or pleasure. Inner life is totally changed but outer life remains the same.



29

Satsang

Satyananda Ashram, Mangrove Mountain, Australia, 12 November 1980.

How can I discover which path of yoga is correct for me – the way of love, action or wisdom?

The way of action is karma yoga and the way of wisdom is jnana yoga. You have to follow both of them. Just as a bird flies with two wings, man has to fly with two wings of *jnana*, wisdom, and *karma*, action. Man is not only the body; he is a combination of head, heart and hands. Hands represent karma, head represents jnana and heart represents bhakti. Since we are a combination of head, heart and hands, we have to practise jnana, karma and bhakti yoga simultaneously.

Can a person always quicken his spiritual evolution by yoga techniques alone, or at some stage must he try consciously through actions to overcome his personal problems before further progress can be made?

The purpose of yoga is to lead you along the path of spiritual enlightenment. Yoga is not just hatha yoga and raja yoga. It is a combination of karma yoga, the yoga of dynamic expression; bhakti yoga, the yoga of emotional expression; and raja yoga, hatha yoga, mantra yoga, kundalini yoga, kriya yoga and jnana yoga. All these practices together are known as yoga.

When you practise meditation, raja yoga, you are transforming the deeper and subtler stuff of your mind. When you are interacting with the world and living with other people, you must maintain some sort of discipline; this is provided by karma yoga. So together karma yoga and raja yoga enhance one's spiritual evolution, but at the same time you must practise bhakti yoga. Without practising *bhakti*, supreme devotion, you cannot surrender your ego, you cannot understand the reality of your being within the context of the whole universe.

Without jnana yoga you cannot realize your real nature. You cannot understand who you are and the nature of your real being. You will not understand whether your physical body is real or whether your mind is real or whether or not you have a spirit. And if you have such a thing as a spirit, what is it like? So in order to enhance your spiritual progress, your yoga practice must be an integral one. It must be a balanced combination of elements from all these parts of yoga.

When I am away from you and lose awareness of your presence in my life, what can I do to reawaken that awareness?

When the battery of a car is flat, you recharge it. In the same way, when the disciple is far away from his guru and loses contact with him, either he should seek out the company of his guru or live with other people who will help him awaken his spiritual awareness.

Are there certain methods that will bring you closer to the guru than others?

A sannyasin is always very close to his guru. Of course, householders are also very close to their guru, but from time to time there are diversions in their life. There are many chances of dissipation in their life, but as far as a sannyasin is concerned, he is very close to his guru because he tries to remove the veil, the distractions and dissipations which arise between himself and his guru.

Unless one has great faith and understanding and a sort of enlightenment within himself, he will not have a choice regarding a particular guru. The choice that one makes to follow a particular guru is a result of the deep understanding, the conviction and the faith that are in him. These are the things which really bring both of them closer to each other.

You see, guru is like the main transforming station. The inner guru is the generating station. *Atman*, the inner guru which we can never see, which we don't understand but we have heard about, is the generating station. The visible guru, the guru in the physical body, is the transforming station, what we call a substation, where energy from the generating station is transformed according to the need of the town or city.

The disciples act as channels for that energy to different centres. So what is important is that a disciple has to be a good conductor, not a bad conductor. Although zinc and copper are good conductors, when it rains the zinc wires accumulate carbon and that causes a distortion or some sort of block in the energy flow. The zinc wire is connected with the main line, but the electricity does not pass through because the nature of zinc is to accumulate carbon when it rains, but copper doesn't.

Therefore, the disciples are of different categories; some are copper wires and some are zinc, they accumulate carbon from time to time. So a disciple should not only be a good conductor for the flow of his guru's energy, he should also see that he is not too flexible and he doesn't accumulate too much carbon. For that purpose a process of introspection, a process of understanding oneself in relation to the situation has to take place. Then the guru and disciple come closer to each other.

When we talk about this coming closer to each other, we don't mean in the physical or emotional sense, because most of us in our present century try to understand coming closer together in the emotional sense. There is a different meaning to it also. Coming closer to each other in the case of guru and disciple means that the disciple is a good conductor. He is a

channel through which the energy of the guru or the energy of the Supreme can pass on to him, and he can carry that energy as a good conductor to different places, wherever light or spiritual energy is required.

If a disciple thinks that he is really close to me or if I think that he is also very close to me, it shouldn't be in the emotional sense, because I love him or he loves me. It is because whatever I have, whatever I'm passing through, that energy should be carried on by him to different places. Many of you are already going out from this ashram, teaching in different cities. All over the world many disciples are passing on the theoretical knowledge, the practical knowledge, the spiritual peace and inner understanding which yoga gives of oneself. This means they are passing on the spiritual energy to different people in many countries and they are the transmitting poles. When the disciples become transmitting poles, they should be considered close to their guru.

Please explain the emotional relationship which exists between guru and disciple.

As man evolves he becomes aware of higher forms of emotions and he learns to seek their fulfilment. At a certain stage he is aware of brotherly, platonic, paternal and marital love. For the fulfilment of these needs, different people come into his life, for example, mother, father, brother, friend, lover, son and daughter. However, there comes a point in life when not the emotion but the devotion wakes up in man. Devotion is a refined state of emotional love. You may use the word love, I don't mind, but I would prefer to use the word devotion. The same emotion sublimated and transformed attains a state of metamorphosis; that is devotion.

In the course of evolution, when devotion becomes full, then we go in search of someone to whom we can give that devotion. When we were five or six, we were running after friends. When we became fifteen or sixteen, we developed a certain type of emotional yearning and we went in search of a boy or girl friend to fulfil it. The search is the same with other

forms of fulfilment in life, but the awareness of our need is different. If that need is not fulfilled, we have a type of panic in our personality. With the evolution of human consciousness the emotions go through a state of metamorphosis and transformation, until they reach a stage when something else is needed to fulfil them. It is at this time that guru becomes a need in our life, as much as a boy or girl was a need in our teens, or a friend was a need when we were a child.

Devotion is the concentrated form of all shades of emotion. Emotion is one force, but it has many channels. Some flow towards other people, objects, ambitions and affairs in life. When emotions attain sublimity, they unite to form one force, just as many small streams converge to form a large river. So, devotion is all the different channels of emotion fused into one, and that is why devotion is said to be an all consuming force. Once you develop devotion, all the forms of emotion are consumed. It is said that guru is father, husband, wife, mother, brother, friend and teacher, because in him the totality of emotions is consumed.

When devotion awakens, the universe appears to be infinite and vast and you find that you are all alone. You know not where you came from nor where you are going. This is a psychic experience in your life. However, devotion to guru does not arise on account of insecurity or loneliness; it comes when you realize the limitations of all other forms of fulfilment in life.

All other fulfilments are subject to certain conditions related to time, space and object. They have a beginning and an end. They are ever-changing and often end in frustration and disgust. Before they are fulfilled, there is a lot of excitement, passion, restlessness and anxiety. After the moments of enjoyment, they leave behind a lot of guilt. This is what man becomes aware of in the course of time. So, the relationship between guru and disciple is one of a higher kind, and until you have become aware of that need in your life, your relationship with guru cannot be on the level of devotion.

Devotion and divine love are the same. When you love anything of this world with passion, you know what happens

to you. Your total being is directed towards attainment of that aim, whether it is money, power, men or any other object. And many times in our life we completely forget ourselves for the achievement of that aim. Everything else becomes secondary and insignificant. That is the delusion of the mind, when you are running after worldly objects.

When your mind is directed to guru with devotion, the totality of your consciousness is completely saturated, is totally overpowered by the consciousness of guru or God, and then there comes a moment in life when this duality of consciousness is not felt. There is a state of non-duality of consciousness. This unity of awareness is the ultimate aim to be achieved by the guru-disciple relationship.

Security and insecurity are only relative factors for those people who approach guru with their normal emotions as if he were just an ordinary man. Then you seek the shelter and the protection of the guru, and you gain security by being close to him, by being loved by him. But this only occurs when the normal emotions are in play.

Please speak to us about faith.

It is better that you speak about faith with the disciples who represent it. Unless you have faith, you will not be able to become a sannyasin. You are faith. It is difficult to speak about it because it is something which one has to enact in life. A child has faith, a disciple has faith, and that faith is man's realization. It is his greatest and most valuable equipment in life.

Constant remembrance is difficult to keep up because the mind moves in bits, it is never constant. There is fluctuation, there are interruptions due to the different *samskaras*, the different sorts of archetypes, that come to the surface from time to time. But if there is constant awareness and remembrance, then the task becomes very easy. However, if that is not there it does not matter. Day by day if you go on deepening your awareness, then maybe in the course of time it will come to you.

Do we come to you for the first time in this life, or was there a link that we had with you in our previous lives?

As far as your question goes, I have to reply in brief. I don't know about others, I only know about myself. I have been with many people in the past who are with me as my disciples in the present life. At certain moments I can know this, but not every time. This is so far as my personal experience is concerned.

Now, according to the philosophy, the relationship between guru and disciple is longstanding. It is not for the first time that one becomes a sannyasin disciple. Ordinarily you go to someone and take a mantra from him. That is different. But when you surrender yourself, your personality and your material future, the wealth, the name and everything, it is not a small thing. It is a total dedication which a sannyasin disciple makes to his guru, and this cannot happen unless the circumstances of his previous life compel him to do that.

It is not easy to change your name, shave your head, change your dress, leave your home and family, sell your property. It is only possible if the destiny, if the circumstances from your previous incarnation have brought you to this point of commitment. Therefore, you should understand that the relationship between guru and sannyasin disciple is intended to be a longstanding one. It is a permanent union or commitment.

How to free the mind?

Little by little. Well, everybody knows how to make the mind free. What holds the mind, where is the chain? Your thought, your awareness is always following a particular train – about desire, jealousy, greed, passion, attachment, ego, love, hatred. These are the things which you think about, so take them up one by one and examine them. Jealousy is the easiest one, then take up another one and try to separate them from your mind by proper suggestion and analysis.

For example, it is perfectly useless and unnecessary to hate others or to be envious of them. So speak to your mind,

“What are you doing? It is not at all profitable; it doesn’t help in any way. You are only thinking unnecessarily. It is a waste of time and energy.” If you develop this habit of witnessing and addressing the mind, little by little you can make it free.

Supposing you have a tape recorder which runs on batteries. Now, when you are recording a speech, the tape recorder is kept running, but if you are not using it and you still keep it running, the batteries will soon be depleted. In the same way, when it is necessary to use the mind it should be used properly, but when it is not necessary the mind should be kept in silence.

Some things in this world can only be done physically, by employing the body. There are certain problems or situations where you have to employ the mind, the intellect or the emotions. You must know when to employ the body and when to employ the mind, intellect and emotions. We have seen that in many situations where we need to work through the intellect, we work through the emotions instead – that is a misuse of emotion. It is like shooting a mosquito with a shotgun.

Where you can manage by logic, by reasoning, by intellect, do not use the emotions. Each and every instrument I have just mentioned uses a lot of energy. The body uses the minimum energy and emotion uses the maximum. When you use your emotions in tackling certain situations in life, you are using the maximum possible energies. That is why you see people in this world who are underweight; they suffer from emotional stress, nervous breakdown.

People undergoing intellectual stress have a coronary breakdown. People suffering from sensory stress have insomnia or physical diseases. As you go higher, from body to senses, to mind, to intellect, to emotions, you are using greater amounts of energy. In my opinion, emotions should be used only for a spiritual purpose, either for God or for spiritual life, for guru or for your sadhana. That should be the emotional aspect.

When you live in the world with a family, children, job or business, you should use your mind and your intellect to the maximum. If you use your intellect and your mind in different

situations, say in family situations or in business situations, then whatever happens to you does not affect you. It does not shake your whole existence; it only creates a small tremor in your intellect, in your reason, that's all. You feel the pain and then it is gone. You feel the pleasure and then it is over. However, when pain and pleasure, when tragedy and comedy take place in the emotional realm, then they do not go away so soon.

The emotional personality of man is a much broader dimension. The physical personality, as you can see, is about five feet six inches high, and the mental personality is much greater than that. However, the range or extent of the emotional personality is very deep, and once something touches that, it touches the core of human existence. So you should also learn which instrument to employ when you are dealing with life.

Last month when we were travelling, my car got a flat tyre at one particular place. So one of the swamis was trying to loosen the screws, but he could not do it because he was using the wrong wrench. He was using the wrench from our other car. I was there and I said, "You should be using the other wrench." Then they got the right wrench and in a minute they got the tyre off.

So you have to use the right instrument for the different problems in life. Sometimes you use the emotions, sometimes you use the intellect, and sometimes the problems of life can simply be ignored.

Why is it that women who practise yoga tend to put weight on the hips and their ankles swell?

I don't think this is so. Usually when you practise yoga, you become slim, slender and symmetrical. However, there comes a moment when yoga begins to work with your mind and emotions, and it is able to control the speed of the emotions. You feel calm and quiet within yourself and then perhaps you begin to grow all around. You grow in your head, you grow in your hips and you grow in your ankles.

I have seen that those people who practise yoga for many years are very slim and symmetrical in the beginning – I am talking about swamis – but afterwards, when something happens in their mind, then they begin to grow physically. You can see this in most of the great souls – Sri Aurobindo, Ramana Maharshi, Swami Sivananda, Anandamai Ma, Swami Nityananda and many swamis.

I have seen many of them. However, this happens when some change occurs in the mind, when they come to a point of attainment, when they have gained an experience of peace. At this time a great change also seems to take place in their physical structure as well. That is what happens there. Therefore, perhaps those who have large ankles and hips are so much the wiser.

Please tell us about mantra.

For a long time it was thought that a mantra was a name of God, hence it was associated with religion and religious sects. However, the science of tantra contains a lot about mantra, in fact, mantra is one of the most important parts of tantra. In tantra, *mantra* is considered simply as a sound which can reach a certain frequency of vibration. We are educated people and when we learn the mantra *Om*, the written form appears in our mind, either in the Roman form or in the Sanskrit script. However, if an illiterate person were told to consider the mantra *Om*, can you imagine what his impression would be? His perception would be in the form of sound vibrations belonging to different ranges.

Now, what we perceive of a sound is its normal range of vibration. When it is uttered, a sound or a word is just a crude sound wave. But as you transform the state of your mind and as your consciousness becomes more and more refined, the vibrations of this same sound attain a very high frequency. It still sounds the same to our ears but, in fact, the sound knows no barriers. Normally the range it travels is limited. I can hear your sound and you can hear mine, but when the vibrations of this same sound are raised to a higher frequency, then its

range is increased enormously. It can cross oceans and it can travel thousands of miles in a second. Therefore, sound has different levels, different vibrations, different frequencies.

The great tantric rishis realized that not just particular words, but every word and sound constituted a potential field of energy. On that realization they formulated the science of mantra. They also conducted investigations into the number of different sounds that could exist. At first they only discovered twenty and later they discovered more, giving them a total of fifty-six. These fifty-six sounds were represented by fifty-six letters, which became the basis of Sanskrit. Hence the Sanskrit language contains the greatest number of mantras that one could possibly find.

These mantras do not relate to any divinity, to any god or goddess. They are simply combinations of different sound waves. Every sound produces a different sound wave. Take the sounds *ga*, *kri* and *shri*. Their written forms are different and if you measured the sound waves which they produce, you would find that they are different too. Every sound has a different form, a different colour and a different frequency. And each sound produces a different kind of reaction.

In the science of tantra sounds are divided, broadly speaking, into twelve groups. Each of these groups corresponds to one of the twelve zodiac areas. Every human being and every being that is born is classified under a particular zodiac sign. Everybody has what we call a birth sign, hence, everybody has his own set of sounds. These are his mantras.

There are three different categories of mantra: sattwic, rajasic and tamasic. The mantras we give to people belong to the sattwic category. The rajasic and tamasic types of mantras are used for things like magic, witchcraft and hypnotizing people. We never use those mantras nor do we have any particular knowledge about them. Sattwic mantras are those which have a beautiful and beneficial influence on people's consciousness.

A mantra is like a seed. When you sow a seed in your garden, you cover it with soil. After a few days it germinates and produces shoots. In the same way, mantra is sown by

the guru in the heart and consciousness of the disciple. The disciple keeps the mantra concealed within himself and it remains there for some time. Then according to the efforts which the disciple himself has made, the mantra begins to produce illuminating experiences. Eventually it blossoms into the beautiful flowers of enlightenment.

When you take a mantra, first of all you should pronounce it very slowly. Practise it out loud, then try to repeat it mentally. When you do this, repeat it quite quickly. Finally, repeat your mantra very slowly in rhythm with your breath, either deep breathing or ujjayi breathing in the frontal passage from navel to throat or in the spinal passage from mooladhara to sahasrara. As you breathe in, repeat part of your mantra and as you breathe out, repeat the rest of it.

The practice of mantra represents a very important stage in the unfolding of higher awareness. In the practice of mantra, concentration is not important. Some people are unable to control their minds; their minds tend to waver. If these people try hard to concentrate during meditation, they will become very tense. All you have to do with mantra is to keep practising it in the way I have shown you. Let your mind vacillate, let it go. Do not try to rein in the mind, but just keep on chanting or repeating your mantra. If you are repeating it mentally, just keep doing that. If you are practising it with the breath, keep doing that. The mind should be given total freedom.

In the course of time, as you keep practising mantra, your mind will find its own centre automatically. When this happens, when the mind attains balance and composure, there will be a release of energy. Then various experiences will begin to happen. However, the experiences which take place with the release of this energy can become obstacles to your further progress. Despite them and during them, you must maintain a constant awareness of your mantra. Otherwise these experiences of light, forms, sounds, music and objects will become an obstacle to your path.

In the practice of mantra, constant repetition with a mala is important. There are two periods when you should practise

mantra. One is in the early morning and the other is at night when you are in bed. In the morning after your bath, asanas and pranayama, sit down in one of the meditation postures and chant your mantra with a mala. Practise it in the manner I have outlined. Do this without trying to focus your mind. Again at night, sit on your bed and practise your mantra. Do at least one round of the mala, or do two or three rounds if you can. Decide for yourself how many rounds you will do beforehand.

Mantra is also a part of the relationship between guru and disciple. Once you receive a mantra from your guru, it forms a bond between you. Disciples look to their guru for spiritual enlightenment and for spiritual experience. Everybody has certain expectations from other people. You expect something from your wife, from your husband and from your children, parents, friends and teachers. You expect love, care, security and protection. In the same way, disciples look to their guru for spiritual enlightenment and spiritual progress.

It has been said that disciples become too dependent on their guru, but this is not correct. Disciples have their own lives, business, families and jobs. They each have their own fulfilment, personalities and destiny. However, when it comes to the question of spiritual awareness, then there must be some kind of bond between guru and disciple. When a guru gives a mantra and a disciple accepts it, this represents an acceptance of the relationship on both sides. This relationship is purely spiritual. Everybody has a guru inside them, but in a dormant and potential condition. This inner guru has to be awakened and in order for this to happen the external guru is very necessary. This is the purpose of the guru-disciple relationship, and in this relationship mantra plays a very important role.

When you accept a mantra from a guru, he passes on to you a lot of his energy. If he has positive energy, this is transferred, but if he has negative energy, that is transferred to you as well. Therefore, people who take mantra from a guru should think about all these things very carefully. They should consider whether the guru is capable of giving

them the right kind of mantra and the right kind of energy. Some gurus transfer only positive energy, but others transfer negative energy as well. However, it is only the guru's positive energy that will give peace, happiness, encouragement and faith in spiritual life.



30

Breaking Through the Illusions

Satyananda Ashram, Mangrove Mountain, Australia, 14 November 1980.

In the beginning, man used to walk at the speed of four miles an hour – that was how he covered distances. In time he learned to use the horse and bullock. Then he invented the automobile, in which he could travel at forty, sixty and even eighty miles an hour, twenty times as fast as he could in the beginning. Finally came the aeroplane which enabled him to reach a speed of six hundred miles an hour. If you compare four miles an hour to six hundred miles an hour, you will see that it is one hundred and fifty times as fast. I am putting this forward as an example.

There is a natural rate of spiritual evolution at which the consciousness of an individual progresses from life to life. But a consciousness which is evolving at the rate of nature is evolving very slowly. At that rate it would take hundreds of thousands of years to reach the end point of human evolution. However, the rishis, saints and yogis, who studied the science of consciousness, discovered that this rate could be accelerated. They found that the evolution of spirit followed an inherent law, and that this law could be manipulated. They experimented with all kinds of religious and mystical practices to find out how to vary the time factor involved. The conclusions that they came to are to be found in the simple practices of kriya yoga.

When you practise kriya yoga, you are practising something which will help you to transform your consciousness at a speed greater than that found in nature. In the realm of nature there are inherent laws everywhere. We have discovered them in agriculture, chemistry, physics, botany, and in almost every field of study. Once we know what they are, we can alter the rate of evolution of whatever we are dealing with, of a particular chemical, plant, or any form of matter. The practices of kriya yoga bring us face to face with the inherent laws that govern the evolution of the human spirit.

The power of maya

When we look at this question, we must realize that the individual human spirit is locked in maya and avidya. These are the terms used in Indian philosophy. *Maya* has to do with things which really do not exist at all, but which seem to exist very strongly. *Avidya*, on the other hand, makes things which do exist appear to be very different to what they really are. In the language of modern psychology, man is locked in psychosis and neurosis. These terms come very close to explaining what is meant by maya and avidya.

Maya is a very mysterious force. It seems to be a distinctive characteristic of the human mind that things which do not exist actually become part of our experience. The spirit, the *atman*, is beyond pain. When we feel pain, it is due to maya. The spirit is fearless. The homogeneous consciousness which we all share is far from fear, but still we find that everybody is insecure and afraid of things to come. Again, that is due to the power of maya, which along with avidya, are forces of nature and should be studied.

What do we mean by nature here? We mean that homogeneous force which lies behind all natural phenomena. In yoga philosophy we call it *prakriti*; in tantra we call it *shakti*. It is a nature which is eternal and everlasting. It hypnotizes us; it weaves a magic spell around us. These illusions which nature weaves are the very things that hold us back from spiritual experience. I will give you an example.

You are walking at night in the dark, and you are climbing some steps. Suddenly a child throws a piece of rope at you and it gets caught in your legs. Immediately you are gripped by fear, “Oh, it is a snake!” Now, what happened here? It was not a snake, but you felt that it was. This was because the snake existed as a fear in your mind, and you identified this fear of yours with the rope.

The same kind of thing can happen with any other mental patterns or experiences. This means that our minds are perpetually dealing with illusions, not with realities. Our minds are in a constant state of hypnosis. The practices of kriya yoga will go a long way in helping to break down these illusions. They appear to be very simple practices, but their effects on the nadis, chakras, kundalini and on the nervous system and hormones of the body go well beyond any explanation that modern science can offer.

A higher experience

Kriya yoga is something I have been teaching and talking about for years. Here I do not intend to go into the details of its history, philosophy and practice, but I have found that people who practise it all over the world, even if they have not been able to awaken their kundalini, have definitely been able to discover more in life than they could have otherwise. They have been able to attain a higher quality of experience and a higher level of consciousness.

Today people are not able to concentrate or control their minds at all, but neither are they able to follow the puritanical path offered by religion. People’s feelings and beliefs have changed. In this situation, kriya yoga can help people very much; but to be able to practise it with conviction, they need to know a lot about it.

Just recently I finished compiling a very comprehensive manual on kriya yoga which will soon be published in India. Whenever your faith dwindles and your mind leads you off track, you can use this book to rekindle your enthusiasm. It will give you the inspiration you need to keep on with your practice.

Dehypnotization

About two months ago I was in Bogota, Colombia. Our ashram there is very important for it is also one of the most powerful spiritual centres in Latin America. We hold two kriya yoga courses there every year. This year I was there for the Yoga Convention where seven hundred people were present for a kriya yoga course, many were priests from the Catholic church. All the participants had spent a year preparing themselves for the course. I spent some time talking to these South American people and I asked them why they felt that kriya yoga could help them to transform the quality of their consciousness.

The answer they gave me was in terms of an analogy. A caterpillar first encases itself within a cocoon. It hibernates there for some time until it comes to maturity. Finally, when the time is right, it makes a hole in the cocoon and emerges, totally transformed, as a beautiful butterfly. This process is called metamorphosis. It leads to the most surprising transformations. How can a caterpillar suddenly develop beautiful wings? Where was it for so long? In a cocoon. What was the cocoon? Its own creation.

This is what human beings also do. We weave a knot of maya around us; we weave a knot of avidya around us. We create our own bondages, confusions, conflicts and complexes, and then we exist within them in a sad state of *tamas*. We can't move, we can't think, we can't feel at peace and we can't do what we want to do in life because we have closed ourselves in with our own karma. Finally however, when awareness dawns we make a little hole in our cocoon and come out. Then we are free souls; we are beautiful butterflies which float freely with the wind and the breezes.

It is in this way that kriya yoga will help us become free of the fetters we have created for ourselves. Kriya yoga is a process of dehypnosis. We have hypnotized ourselves. Every day, every moment of our lives, we spend indoctrinating and brainwashing ourselves. We do it with every belief and every suggestion that we give ourselves. In this state of hypnosis, we do not know where reality lies. However, when we start

practising kriya yoga, we begin to free ourselves from this deep self-hypnosis.

Persevere with the practice

That is why in the initial stages many people go through a lot of unusual experiences, a lot of dreams, strong and unruly emotions, and many thoughts both positive and negative. This is no cause for alarm because what is happening is that you are purging your mind, you are throwing out all the dirt. So don't misunderstand these experiences and give up kriya yoga because of them.

It is not possible for you to do all the kriyas every day, but you can practise a few at least. Even if you give it only a few precious minutes, kriya yoga will still have a very deep effect on the processes of your consciousness. From time to time come to kriya yoga courses and renew your enthusiasm, so that you can go forward with greater speed.

A final few words: Kriya yoga is a practice from tantra, therefore it is for everybody. It does not matter whether or not you believe in a religion or lead a spiritual life. It does not matter at all if you have your own peculiarities of behaviour or nature, or if you are unable to extricate yourself from the life of the senses. It does not matter if you are not even able to concentrate for a few minutes.

However, it is important to do kriya yoga practices without any feeling of tension. Some people might feel tense to begin with because they have to keep their eyes open, but that is only a temporary thing; do not worry about it.

31

The Story of Rama

Satyananda Ashram, Mangrove Mountain, Australia, 15 November 1980.

There was once a great king, Dasharatha of Ayodhya, who had three queens, Kaushalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra. The second queen was very dear to him and she was also very daring. Once the king was fighting on a battlefield and this queen accompanied him. While the battle was on, one of the wheels of the chariot gave way. The queen immediately got down from the chariot and held the wheel in place until the battle was over. The king was very much obliged to her for performing this brave act, so he offered her any two boons and promised he would never take them back. Of course, she would not accept the king's offer at first, but eventually two boons were given to her.

In the course of time, the three queens gave birth to four great sons: Rama by the eldest, Bharata by this daring wife, and twins, Lakshman and Shatrughna, by the youngest. The brothers lived together until the king grew old and thought of handing the throne over to the eldest son.

The exile of Rama

It was at this time that the court intrigue began. The maidservant of the second wife, a very shrewd woman, went to this daring lady and said, "You are the king's favourite queen.

He has always spoken highly of you and loved you so much, but when it comes to the question of handing over the throne, he opted for the son of the eldest queen. Isn't that an injustice?" Women after all are women. Then the maidservant, who was very clever and wily, got an idea and said, "The king has given you two boons, don't you remember? This is the right time to cash in on them." After a long discussion, this crafty woman ultimately succeeded in winning the queen over.

So it was that the second queen went to the king in a rage and demanded that he fulfil her two boons, which she had never previously asked for. She knew that the king would have to comply, so she demanded, "First, your eldest son must be sent into exile, and second, my son must be placed on the throne." At this, the king became very sad and replied, "How can that be? Rama is the eldest. Traditionally, he is the one who must inherit this throne. And what has happened to you? Why are you acting like this? After all, Bharata is also my son."

The king, however, had to surrender to her demands as he had promised to fulfil the two boons and he could not go back on his word. The eldest son was ordered to go into exile for fourteen years, and the second son was placed on the throne. The young prince, Sri Rama, readily accepted going into exile, in spite of the fact that he was recently married and very popular in his kingdom. The citizens wanted him to stay at all costs, but he told them all, "No, my duty lies with the fulfilment of my father's wishes. Therefore, I must go to live in the forest."

Ravana's trick

When Rama was preparing to leave, his wife Sita and one of his brothers Lakshman, the son of the youngest queen, also followed him. The three of them lived in the forest for a period of fourteen years. They had a small hut and one day the younger brother was standing at the door and called out, "Look, there is a beautiful deer outside." Sita then said to her husband, "Oh, what a lovely deer! Can I have it?"

So, Rama went chasing after the deer until he was very far away. Finally he shot an arrow at the deer and it screamed the name of Sita so loudly that she heard it in the distance. Then Sita told the younger brother, "Something has happened to Rama, please go to his rescue." But Lakshman said, "No, nothing has happened to him. It is some sort of trick." However, Sita was so adamant that Lakshman had no choice but to go and leave her.

In the meantime, there came a very strong and stalwart fellow dressed like a swami with malas, matted locks, *yoga danda* (wooden staff placed under the arm) and *kamandalu* (coconut shell begging bowl). The sadhu said to Sita, "I want something to eat." Sita replied, "I will give you some food." But the sadhu seeing her standing on the threshold of her hut said, "I will not take food inside. Come outside and serve me, otherwise I will not eat."

Now, in India, a swami is respected so much that nobody wants to displease him. Who knows who he is? The word of a sadhu could be a curse or a boon. So she went out and put a little foodstuff in his bowl. The sadhu, who was really Ravana in disguise, took her by the hand, swung her onto his shoulder and flew off with her. Sita cried out for help, but there was nobody there to come to her rescue because both the brothers had gone chasing after the golden deer. The chase took them so far away that Sita was easily carried off.

Ravana took Sita to his kingdom. He was a very powerful king of his time, having a mighty army, great commanders, many kinds of arms, all sorts of skills in war as well as many magic powers. Ravana kept Sita in his palace, but she would not yield to his wishes. He tried to tempt her time and again, saying, "You can be my chief queen and all my queens will be your handmaids." But Sita would always reply, "No, nothing doing. Rama is first and last for me."

When Ravana could not manage to change her heart, he placed her in a beautiful garden with many young women to indoctrinate and brainwash her, day in and day out. "My lady, our king is so grand that even the gods fear him. Nobody on

earth is his equal. He has immense riches; he is so strong; he is great.” But nothing could influence or tempt Sita, and she remained there in the garden, remembering the name of her husband with constant awareness.

The rescue of Sita

When Rama and Lakshman returned, they found the cottage empty. They searched everywhere, but could not find Sita. They went looking in different places, asking various people. Some said, “Yes, we saw a man flying away very fast with a lady in his chariot, and she was crying out your name.” They knew that Sita was the lady, so they followed until they came to the seashore where they had no option but to stop. Then the two brothers collected a large army of local inhabitants who were very big monkeys. The brothers were assisted in every way by the strongest monkey, Hanuman, who was actually a man with a tail.

One day Hanuman said to Rama, “First I must do something to demoralize the king.” So he crossed to the other shore and climbed into the garden where Sita was sitting and remembering the name of her Lord. At the top of a tree, the monkey started repeating the name of Rama. Sita was amazed and said, “What man in this city knows the name of my husband?” When she looked up and saw a monkey there, she asked, “Who are you? Where have you come from?” Hanuman narrated the whole story of his coming and said, “Don’t worry, your husband knows that you are here and he is on his way with a huge army to rescue you.”

Then Hanuman started destroying the whole garden, breaking the trees, throwing the fruit and becoming larger and larger by his miraculous powers. Soon the news was brought to the king that a terrible monkey was destroying the whole city. The king commanded his officers, “Capture the monkey and bring him here.”

The army was sent out and the monkey was brought to the court. “I am going to punish you for destroying my property and disrupting my kingdom,” the king said. For punishment

he brought rags soaked in kerosene oil and tied them to the monkey's tail. "Burn his tail," he ordered. However, while his tail was burning, Hanuman escaped and jumped from house to house, setting them all on fire. Finally he plunged into the sea to extinguish the flames.

Then Rama and Lakshman and their army crossed the ocean and invaded the kingdom. The battle began and eventually all of Ravana's commanders were finished. It is a very long story. Rama and Ravana came face to face on the battlefield. Ravana still had his war chariots, army and weapons, while Rama was fighting unaided without any vehicle. He shot arrows which cut off the king's head, but another head would pop up and again the king would come alive. It seemed the battle would never end.

Rama did not know how to kill the king. Then one of his advisers gave him a clue, "First shoot an arrow at his navel because he has a rejuvenating gland there. If that is pierced, he will be finished. Otherwise you can never kill him." So on the last day of battle, Rama shot an arrow into the king's navel and killed him.

Man's internal battle

This is the famous story of Rama, which is known all over India and the world, not merely as an episode in history that took place once upon a time, but as a symbol of the great and powerful negative forces which completely envelop man's knowledge, enlightenment and spiritual awareness, which are hidden within the folds of this negative, subterranean mind. This battle symbolizes the battle which is taking place within everybody, every day. Historically it took place thousands of years ago, but spiritually it is taking place eternally, every day in every one of us.

This is the story of conflict within man's personal consciousness. It talks about the great struggle which man unconsciously and consciously is going through. When we are engrossed in the sensual life, only attached to matter and when we are not able to look beyond what the eyes can see,

we do not understand the conflict at all. For most of us this conflict is either material conflict, like fights and quarrels between husband and wife, brother and sister, etc., or, if we go a little deeper, the conflict for us is only psychological. But this is not correct. The external, material, psychological and emotional conflicts that we face in life are a reflection of the inner conflicts which cannot be seen unless we go deeper.

The deeper you go in spiritual life, the clearer you can see the conflicts. As long as you are ignorant, you cannot see those conflicts. For an ignorant man, everything is bliss. As the saying goes, "Ignorance is bliss." But the moment you face the mind and psyche, the conflicts become more and more marked. The deeper you go in spiritual life, the more disappointed and frustrated you feel, and you say to yourself at times, "What has happened to me? What are these struggles on different planes that I am becoming aware of?"

This is the internal battlefield where the war is being waged every day, every minute. When we go to sleep, we forget the struggles. When we go into the dream, we are partially aware of them. When we drink we completely close our eyes to the realities of the struggle. When we take marijuana, hashish or any other type of drug, even in the name of a spiritual experience, we are only sidetracking the real problems, the real struggles.

How to bypass the mind

We have to go through the struggle. The spirit of man is in exile, in the wilderness, and with his spirit is the light. Many times, due to the temptations of life and the forces of maya and avidya, psychosis and neurosis, enlightenment seems far from our vision and sight. Thus I gave this well-known story, not to tell you about a great man, but to tell you the way we have to conquer and proceed on.

The negativity of life cannot be eradicated. The very basis of existence is craving. As long as we have cravings in life, then the negativity of life cannot be eliminated because the mind receives the fruit of our cravings. Man becomes old

and emaciated, but still the cravings remain strong all the time. The youngest of the young and the oldest of the old, even when they are near the graveyard, suffering from the most vulnerable diseases, face the same intensity of craving. This continual craving cannot be conquered, fulfilled or suppressed. As long as you have it in the mind, it is there.

In order to bypass the very basis of man's mind and desire there is something very important that has to be done. What is that? The practice of kriya yoga. Vipareeta karani mudra is one of the most important practices of kriya yoga. It diverts the whole process of energy in manipura chakra, the navel centre, back up to sahasrara. Then the energy is installed in its pristine glory. Those of you who have been practising yoga and also those of you who will be doing it in the future must remember that what you are doing is a process of getting over the eternal struggle and finding the real spirit and light within.



Notes

Notes



The satsangs of a realized master are a gift that inspires and blesses all who receive his wisdom and grace. From the 1960s to the 1980s Swami Satyananda's extensive international touring yielded a wealth of spiritual teachings spanning a vast range of subjects. Renowned for their depth of insight, clarity and compassion, the eternal truths revealed in these satsangs are presented in this comprehensive set of volumes *Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati*, for the upliftment of seekers everywhere.

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati Volume: IV is a compilation of talks, question and answer sessions and media interviews given by Swami Satyananda during his visits to Australia between 1968 and 1980. These include the 1976 International Yoga Convention, his historic Guru Poornima visit in 1977 and the 1980 Kriya Yoga seminar. Swami Satyananda offers his timeless guidance in the form of stories, practices, philosophies and practical recommendations illustrating how one can balance the inner and outer dimensions of life in the modern world.



[bar code here]

ISBN : 978-81-85787-05-3